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OUR JUBILEE YEAR.

REMINISCENCES OF A LONG AND BUSY LIFE.

THE year 1882, now commenced, happens to be the JUBILEE year of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL. The first number having been issued on Saturday the 4th February 1832, the work, consequently, on the 4th February 1882, will have existed fifty years. Though an unusual, this is not an unprecedented fact in the history of periodical literature, and I am not disposed to make more of it than it is worth. I think, however, that I am fairly entitled to feel gratified at the singular success of a work which, relying on the support of no party or sect, nor on any species of artistic attraction, should have so long kept its ground, and that now, after a lapse of fifty years, should, judging by circulation, be more popular than it was in the early stages of its career. There is more than this literary and commercial success to be thankful for. It is that the hand which penned the Introductory article in the first number of the Journal in 1832, has been spared to write the present address. The varied circumstances of the case stir up so many strange recollections and considerations, that I may be excused for offering some remarks appropriate to the occasion.

The first idea that occurs in a very prolonged retrospect is the prodigious change that has taken place in the social conditions of the country. I feel as if living in a new world, yet with the wonted tokens of antiquity observable as of yore. Old notions and prejudices have silently passed away. The denser forms of ignorance have disappeared. Many pretentious bugbears have been exploded. Grievous indications of poverty in many quarters have been superseded by symptoms of individual and national prosperity. There used to be frequent uproars about the anticipated ruin of labour by the introduction of machinery. Although machinery has in almost all the industrial arts been freely introduced,

there is more employment of labour than ever. By the removal of taxes which pressed severely not only on the absolute necessities of life, but on many articles in common use, a great saving has been effected. All imported food was taxed; salt was taxed to more than thirty times its natural value; soap was taxed; leather was taxed; paper of all kinds was taxed; newspapers were taxed; candles were taxed; window-lights were taxed; spring-carts, such as are now largely used by tradesmen, were taxed; post-letters were taxed according to distance, so that some people could not afford to receive them. At one time, as I recollect, tea was sold at eight shillings a pound; and sugar was four times the price it now is. Through the removal of so many exactions, and from other causes, the humbler classes are now better paid for their labour, better fed, better clothed, and better housed; they are likewise much more thrifty, as is testified by the large deposits in the Savings-banks. Perhaps the most remarkable thing of all is the change as to facility of transit by sea and land through the agency of steam, while telegraphic communications are effected with the swiftness of lightning. Life may not be extended in point of years, but time is immensely economised, and a man may now do more than double what he could attempt to undertake fifty to sixty years since; this, indeed, may be called one of the prime factors in national advancement, which is seldom adverted to. I could refer to numerous meliorations that have occurred in the general political organisation without having provoked disturbance. Common-sense now dispassionately settles matters formerly left to the dominion of temper. Notwithstanding a thousand apprehensions, the envied fabric of British constitutional liberty remains unchanged—only, I think, materially strengthened, with

the grand old monarchy towering over all, and with its foundations securely anchored in the affections of the people.

Born in 1800, I am excluded from any remembrance of the great convulsion in France; but the surgings of that terrible affair were still everywhere visible. Bonaparte was a name of terror. The British Islands were a universal camp. Soldiers were seen, and the beating of drums was heard in all directions. A resolution to preserve the country from invasion, seemed to animate all hearts. The oldest of my distinct recollections as concerns public events was the Battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805, when I was over five years of age. At the firesides were heard congratulations on the victory, which at once settled Napoleon's projects of invasion; these tokens of joy, however, being saddened by the intelligence of the death of Nelson. It has been always something for me to say with a sense of satisfaction that I remember that great naval achievement, the Battle of Trafalgar.

I was not fated to receive more than a plain education in the place of my birth, a small country town in the south of Scotland. Matters there were still somewhat primitive. In the schools I passed through, there was not a map, nor a book on geography, or history, or science. The only instruction consisted of the three Rs, finishing off with a dose of Latin. It was a simple and cheap arrangement, diversified with boisterous outdoor exercises, and a certain amount of fighting, in which I was forced to take a part. My instruction in Latin came abruptly to a conclusion. Lieutenant Waters, in one of the old novels, says, with more energy than elegance, that he still bore the marks of 'Homo' on his person. I likewise have the honour of bearing similar evidences of my acquaintance with Homo. One day, not being quite prompt in answering a question in Latin grammar, my teacher, in one of his irascible moods (which were always distinguishable by his wearing a short bottle-green coat), lifted a ruler and inflicted a sharp blow on the top of my head, which almost deprived me of consciousness, and which, while leaving a small protuberance, is on occasions, after an interval of seventy years, still felt to be awkwardly painful. So much for my acquaintance with Homo. With every respect for his agency in mental culture, I shortly afterwards bade the academy good-bye; and so ended my classical education, or school education of any kind.

It was a miserable business; but after all, I have reason to think it was the best thing that could have happened. An over-cramming of classical learning might have sent me in a wrong direction. I had secured the means of self-instruction through books, and that was deemed sufficient. All depended on making a proper use of the means. My brother Robert, two years younger, more docile and meditative, took kindly to Homo, and continued to prosecute his studies in that

direction some time longer. Both, however, were alike anxious to make up for deficiencies by self-reliance. A little room we occupied was our college. Every spare hour, morning, noon, and night, was devoted to books. We went right through a circulating library, which the small town had the happiness to possess, besides devouring every book within the domestic circle. Light and heavy literature were equally acceptable. The object was to fill the mind with anything that was harmlessly amusing and instructive. At from ten to twelve years of age we had in a way digested much of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' and by this means alone we acquired a knowledge of the physical sciences, not a word of which could have been learned at school. Useful as it proved, such a method of rushing on from book to book is certainly not to be commended. Fortunately, we had good memories, with some sense of discrimination. Robert's memory was wonderful.

Like storms, which though appalling, are sometimes beneficial, misfortunes in ordinary life are occasionally blessings in disguise. A quiet home was suddenly plunged in tribulation. My father, a man of benevolent disposition, but with no great vigour of character, was ruined by inconsiderately, as a merchant, giving credit to a parcel of unprincipled French prisoners of war on parole. It was a clean sweep; and it would have been utterly disastrous, but for the interposition of my mother, a woman of singular nerve and resolution, by nature a lady, and whom circumstances made a heroine. There was nothing for it but to seek a new and more promising scene of operations. By a wise resolution, the family removed to Edinburgh in December 1813; thus quitting a locality where their lineage had existed in the modest position of small proprietors since the days of Robert Bruce. The wrench was sharp, but imperative. At this point, I feel it desirable for a moment to lay aside any consideration of the career pursued by Robert, my younger associate, and to confine myself to a personal narrative.

Anxious to be employed in some way connected with literature, I was, in May 1814, apprenticed for five years to a bookseller. He happened to be a relentless disciplinarian; but that perhaps was rather a good thing for a young fellow entering the world. As our family had soon occasion to remove to a situation a few miles from town, it was my luck to be consigned to the lodging of a decent but penurious widow, in which humble refuge I am to be supposed as endeavouring to live for some years, and to make both ends meet, lodgings and shoe-leather included, on a revenue of four shillings a week. It was a hard but somewhat droll scrimmage with semi-starvation; for, as concerns food, it was an attempt to live on threepence-halfpenny a day. Yet, it was done, and I never thought much about it. I was in the midst of a busy and enlightened community; and if I did at times feel hungry, I enjoyed a charming indulgence in the Pleasures of Hope. I was young, healthy, and resolute in perseverance. It was a most fortunate circumstance that nobody knew me, or cared any-

thing about me. Acquaintanceships would have been thralldom. Isolation was independence. I was, in short, left to fight the Battle of Life in my own way. Youths, generally, make a great mistake in the cultivation of acquaintances, who only embarrass them. The world at large is the true reliance. At intervals, I pursued educational matters in a small way. I made experiments in electricity with the aid of an apparatus which I managed to purchase from very limited savings. I likewise made a study of French, with which I was slightly familiar from recollecting the language of the French prisoners of war. On Sundays I carried a French New Testament in my pocket to church, and pored over its construction in relation to English.

At the time I entered on the busy world, there was much to exhilarate the youthful mind. The close of the French war was coincident with the commencement of the Waverley Novels. When 'Waverley,' in three volumes, was issued in 1814 by Constable, there was a great commotion in the trade; my being despatched for relays of copies, and carrying parcels of them to an eager class of customers, being one of my amusing facts to look back upon. There was a great mystery as to the authorship of this and the speedily succeeding fictions; but it in time fastened down on Walter Scott, whose bulky figure and good-natured countenance were familiar in the streets of Edinburgh. The great victory at Waterloo in 1815, when Bonaparte was done for at last, caused immense public rejoicings. It was the end of a frightful and protracted effort, that had loaded the country with an almost unendurable amount of taxation.

The outburst of the Waverley Novels was followed by various symptoms of mental awakenings in the Scottish capital. There were two striking indications of the kind, each the antipodes of the other. The *Scotsman* newspaper, in the Whig interest, sounded the death-knell of hundreds of vexatious abuses, and caused a prodigious sensation. Taking an interest in its projected appearance, I, in the enthusiasm of the moment, made a push to buy the first copy issued; but such was the crowd, I failed in the attempt; I, however, was able to secure the second copy that was handed out (January 25, 1817). The price was tenpence, owing to the limitation of advertisements, and the costly government stamp. Yet, the sale was immense. This is one of my pleasant retrospects. The *Scotsman*, in its modernised form and price, has long been the leading newspaper in Edinburgh. The other circumstance to be noted was the publication of *Blackwood's Magazine* by an enterprising bookseller of that name (April 1817). It drew around it a number of able literary supporters, Wilson, Lockhart, the Ettrick Shepherd, and others, whose *jeux-d'esprit* speedily gave the work a renown, which, with good management, has carried it on till the present day.

Having elsewhere* related some of the queer incidents in this period of my life, I pass on to a subject more immediately on hand. My apprenticeship came to a close in 1819, and with

five shillings in my pocket—to which sum my weekly wage had been latterly advanced—I was left to begin the struggle of independent exertion. I was fortunate in the moment when thrown on my own resources. A London bookseller, who had come to conduct a trade-sale in Edinburgh, sought my assistance to arrange his specimens. I willingly lent my aid; and this worthy person, understanding that I wanted to begin business, but had only five shillings of capital, gave me an excellent selection of books on credit to the value of ten pounds. Borrowing a truck for the occasion, I wheeled the books to a small place of business I had secured in Leith Walk; and there I exhibited my stock of books on a stall, which I constructed of wood bought with the five shillings. Again, fortune proved favourable. The books were speedily disposed of, and a fresh stock was ordered. A good start had been made. After discharging all my obligations, I had a few pounds over, and by following a rigorous system of thrift, things were decidedly looking up.

In the petty business I had begun, there was much idle time, particularly in wet weather. As a relief from ennui, and if possible to pick up a few shillings, I took to copying small pieces of poetry with a crow-pen, for albums, in a style resembling fine print. This answered so far; but it was slow work, with no prospect of permanent advantage. A brilliant idea shot up. I must have a press and types. There was the small drawback of having no practical knowledge of printing, and no money wherewith to buy a proper stock of materials. As for the knowledge, that hardly cost a thought. In casual visits to printing offices, I had seen types set, and impressions taken. There was surely no difficulty that a few days' experience could not overcome. Then, as regards money, I happened to have three pounds on hand. As if good luck was determined to follow me, a person offered to sell me a small hand-press, and a quantity of types sufficient for a beginning; price of the whole, including type-cases, only three pounds. The types were dreadfully old and worn. They had been employed for the last twenty years in printing a newspaper. The press could print only half a sheet at a time, and made a fearfully wheezing noise when the screw was brought to the pull. These were untoward circumstances that could not be helped, and had to be made the best of. I actually, with these poor appliances, began the business of a printer in addition to my small bookselling concern. After a little time overcoming every difficulty, I managed to execute an edition, small size, of the Songs of Robert Burns, with my own hands bound the copies in boards with a coloured wrapper, sold the whole off, and cleared eight pounds by the transaction. It was all found money; for the work had been done early in the morning, and during bad weather.

My next exploit was of a more ambitious description. It consisted of nothing less than trying to print a periodical, of which Robert was to act as editor. It was to come out fortnightly, and extend to sixteen octavo pages. The eight pounds realised by the success of my Burns, helped to purchase a new fount of letter for the occasion. The old jangling press was still to do duty. The name of the aspiring periodical

* *Memoir of Robert Chambers, with Autobiographic Reminiscences of W. Chambers*, 10th Edition, 1878.

was *The Kaleidoscope*, which went through a brief career of eight numbers, between the 6th October 1821 and 12th January 1822. The papers, mostly of a humorous character, were nearly all written by Robert. I was not able to do much in the way of writing. The setting of types, and the toil of working the press, besides other business duties, were enough, and more than enough, for, under the heavy labour, I considerably broke down in health, and was fain to give the whole thing up. After this, I for a time stuck to bookselling and to job printing. The larger class of letters required for hand-bills, such as 'Dog Lost,' I cut in wood with a penknife. I also printed some small pamphlets of the nature of chap-books, which I was occasionally able to pen. One of them was a History of the Gypsies.

From 1822 till 1832, much writing to little purpose; I was, however, gaining literary experience, and from having to write at short intervals in the course of business, I acquired a facility in letting down and taking up subjects abruptly which has proved useful through life. The works latterly undertaken and executed were the *Gazetteer of Scotland*, a tremendously heavy job—and the *Book of Scotland*, a volume which sketched the special legal institutes of the country; now deservedly forgotten and out of print. Robert had meanwhile taken honours with his pen. The *Traditions of Edinburgh*, a work of historic and antiquarian interest—which was the last of my feats in type-setting, and drawing impressions with the hand-press—was issued in 1824. It at once brought fame and pecuniary advantage. Walter Scott called on Robert to compliment him on the work, and assist him with suggestions. At this time, we had each separately removed to commodious central places in Edinburgh. The period was not a very agreeable one in which to live. In the reign of William IV., there were so many things to correct, that society was kept in constant perturbation. In the midst of political contentions, connected with the Reform Bill, came an alarming epidemic of Asiatic cholera.

Although the period was in various ways dismal, there were occasional gleams of a brighter day. Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes sprang up through the influence of thoughtful individuals. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was founded. Above all, there sprang up a class of low-priced periodicals, mostly worthless and ephemeral, but being popular among the 'masses'—a word which had come into vogue—they answered the purpose of showing how the wind blew. Here, said I, pondering on the subject, is my chance. I have waited for years for a favourable gale, and it has come at last. Taking advantage of the growing taste for cheap literature, let me lead it, if possible, in a proper direction; let me endeavour to elevate and instruct, independently of mere passing amusement; and in particular, let me avoid political, sectarian, or any kind of controversial bias. The matter being important, I in the first place consulted Robert on the subject; but he declined to connect himself with the project, though he promised to help with occasional papers. No further time was lost in cogitation. In January 1832, I issued the prospectus of

the present *Journal*, and the first number appeared on Saturday the 4th of February. It contained an introductory article, written in a fevered state of feeling, as may be judged by the following passages.

'The principle by which I have been actuated is to take advantage of the universal appetite for instruction which at present exists; to supply to that appetite food of the best kind, in such forms and at such price as will suit the convenience of every man in the British dominions. Every Saturday, when the poorest labourer in the country draws his humble earnings, he shall have it in his power to purchase, with an insignificant portion of even that humble sum, a meal of healthful, useful, and agreeable mental instruction. Whether I succeed in my wishes, a brief space of time will determine. I throw myself on the good sense of my countrymen for support; all I seek is a fair field wherein to exercise my industry in their service.' I concluded by notifying the subjects which would receive particular attention.

On the 31st of March 1832, being about six weeks after the commencement of *Chambers's Journal*, appeared the first number of the *Penny Magazine* of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It is learnt from Mr Charles Knight, its publisher, that the *Penny Magazine* was suggested to him on a morning in March, and that the Lord Chancellor (Brougham), who was waited on, cordially entered into the project, which was forthwith sanctioned by the Committee of the Society. The *Penny Magazine*, begun under such distinguished auspices, and which, as is understood, had a very large circulation, terminated unexpectedly in 1845; though not without having exerted, during its comparatively brief career, an influence, along with similar publications, in stimulating the growth of that cheap and wholesome literature which has latterly assumed such huge proportions.

High as were my expectations, the success of the *Journal* exceeded them. In a few days there was for Scotland the unprecedented sale of thirty thousand copies; and shortly afterwards, when copies were consigned to an agent in London for diffusion through England, the sale rose to fifty thousand, at which it long remained, with scarcely any advertising to give it publicity. Some years after this, the circulation exceeded eighty thousand. Robert's views having now considerably changed as regards the importance of the undertaking, he was admitted a partner at the fourteenth number; and from this time is dated the firm of W. & R. Chambers. The early success of *Chambers's Journal* was perhaps partly due to the fact, that at that time the price of newspapers was usually sevenpence, owing to the heavy stamp and advertisement duties. *Chambers's Journal* being free from these exactions, and being a sheet at the price of three-halfpence, while in point of size it was nearly as large as a newspaper, was accepted as a great bargain in reading. It found its way to nooks and corners of the country to which no such papers had ever penetrated, the instructive and entertaining nature of the articles making it a special favourite with young people. Even until the present time, I continue to receive communications from individuals embracing recollections of the vast pleasure with

which as boys they hailed the weekly appearance of the *Journal*. One or two of these may here be presented, as a curiosity.

The head-master of a large and important school in the neighbourhood of London writes as follows: 'You sowed the seeds of my advancement forty years ago. In a village in Cambridgeshire, there were five poor boys whose united weekly wages amounted to seven and sixpence; one of them had given him by a gentleman off the stage-coach a *Chambers's Journal*. The boy read it; and got four more to hear it read. I was one of them; and we agreed to take it weekly. But the difficulty was, how was it to be paid? for one shilling and sixpence a week would not afford literature. I was always presented with a halfpenny a week for the missionaries, and so were two others. The other two could not contribute; but as their share, they would walk seven miles to fetch it. For ten years we stuck together, and were able to do a great deal to educate ourselves. Now, mark the result. I am the head-master of a large and important free school; another was till lately the head-master of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School at Bristol; another became a clergyman; the fourth is now a retired builder; and the fifth is one of the largest sheep-farmers in New Zealand.'

Another writer 'remembers how eagerly the *Journal* was read, in its early days, by all classes. At a country town seventeen miles from Edinburgh, a little band of young men used to walk out two or three miles on the road to intercept the carrier, and bring in the parcel of *Journals* consigned to the local bookseller for more immediate distribution. It was too slow work for these impatient spirits to wait delivery of the parcel in the usual course of carrier-work. Going home on the Saturdays, dozens of young men might be seen reading their copy of *Chambers's* by the way.'

The year that saw the beginning of *Chambers's Journal* brought gloom over the literary world. After an unavailing search for health in the south of Europe, Sir Walter Scott returned to Abbotsford in the course of the summer—to die. The scene was gently closed on the 21st September 1832. The funeral of this illustrious Scotchman was appointed to take place on Wednesday the 26th. Out of regard for Scott, Robert could not remain absent; and in a vehicle procured for the purpose, I accompanied him to the funeral. We felt as if taking a part in an historical pageant, amid scenery for ever embalmed by ballad and legend. The spectacle presented at the final solemnity—the large concourse of mourners clustered under the trees near the ruins of the Abbey of Dryburgh, the sonorous reading of the funeral service amidst the silent crowd, and the gloomy atmosphere overhead—is one never to be obliterated from remembrance.

The impetus given by the success of the *Journal*, and the prospects that immediately ensued, had the effect of expanding a small, into a large business establishment. We never for a moment entertained a notion of transferring the publication of the *Journal* to any publisher outside. From past experiences, that was a species of assistance not required; neither did we need to employ the capital of others to

carry on the undertaking; husbanding the profits that accrued, that was enough for all purposes. From the outset, the rule was laid down never to give bills, but to pay for paper and everything else in ready-money; and after fifty years, that remains the governing principle of the firm, with at the same time a rigorous abstinence from speculations apart from our own business. There, in a few words, is the secret of the now large and prosperous concern of W. & R. Chambers. From the first, there was no time lost in financial scheming, nor in any distraction of the mind to matters of a foreign character; all was concentrated in advancing the single object in view. There was no playing with Fortune, nor frittering away time with frivolities and personal indulgences. Providence had carved out a career suitable to our faculties and instincts; and that career has been strictly followed—namely, that of endeavouring to instruct and harmlessly entertain through the agency of the press. Any other course of conduct would probably have been attended, as in the case of hundreds of similar adventures, by shipwreck and lamentation. Young men of ambitious views are apparently too much in the habit of treating their assigned work in the world as if it were a bit of passing amusement. It is, on the contrary, to be viewed as a matter of earnest and very serious concern.

I shall not expatiate on the number of works small and great, designed to promote the cause of popular instruction, in which we have been from first to last engaged; it is sufficient to say that the whole have been of a character designed to impart useful knowledge in a familiar and agreeable form, and if possible, to cultivate the moral and intellectual faculties of the people. They have, in reality, been a method of educating through the medium of print. Political topics have been studiously avoided, or more properly left to the acknowledged organs of public opinion. So, likewise, matters of a religious nature have been resigned to their appropriate exponents; while no less care has been exercised to exclude subjects or references calculated to wound sentiments of delicacy or propriety. The aim throughout has been to be original and concise, without being coarse and abrupt. Our operations in literary production have not been narrowed to a country or district, but have borne reference to the English-speaking race all over the globe; the consequence being that they are perhaps as well known in the United States and in the colonies as at our own doors. Our more laborious and crowning efforts in the cause of cheap and instructive literature have consisted in the execution of several series of school treatises; and also that now pretty well-known digest, *Chambers's Encyclopædia, a Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*, 10 vols. 8vo, of which the sale has been, and continues to be, very considerable.

It need hardly be explained that alike in editing *Chambers's Journal*, and in preparing the various works here indicated, we have been much indebted to a large body of contributors, and particularly to a succession of able literary assistants. The following names are worthy of being specially mentioned: Mr W. H. Wills, Mr

Leitch Ritchie, and Mr James Payn, as having been acting editors of the *Journal*; and Dr Andrew Findlater, as the erudite acting editor of *Chamber's Encyclopædia*. Nor can our gratitude be withheld from those who have aided in conducting the business portions of the concern; I would more especially refer to Mr William Inglis, ever accurate, true, and faithful in presiding over the accounting department for the long period of fifty years, and who is now happily a member of the firm. Last, not least, thanks are due to the hundreds of skilful artisans, who, by good conduct, have helped to promote the stability of the firm. Here it may be incidentally mentioned that the agency set on foot in London at the commencement of the *Journal*, was, for sufficient reasons, eventually withdrawn, and in its stead a branch of the business was established in Paternoster Row, which has proved in all respects successful.

While thankful for having got over the difficulties that oppressed my early morning, the prosperity of later times has been sadly clouded by the loss of friends and acquaintances, a host so numerous as to make me feel almost as if left alone in society. In my experience, life is liable to be exceedingly imbibed by contentions, which are, after all, speculative and exclusively of private concern, or to be sweetened by an opposite course of conduct. The following is a reminiscence in point. A few years after I began the *Journal*, a Roman Catholic nunnery was set up in a pretty and salubrious suburb of Edinburgh. It was a thing with which the public at large had nothing to do. The ladies who had chosen this retreat under their religious guides, were quiet, well behaved, and unobtrusive. Nevertheless, in the vehemence of sectarian dislike, their windows were broken nightly by persons unknown, under apparently no restraint from the police. The circumstance was so disgraceful, that, by a letter in the newspapers, I called the attention of the city authorities to the outrage, and it was immediately stopped. Shortly afterwards, I was unexpectedly waited upon by Bishop Gillies, a gentleman and scholar connected with the Roman Catholic body, who came to thank me for what he was pleased to call the great service I had performed. This led to a long and agreeable intimacy, both in this country and on the continent. Gillies, now deceased, is one of my pleasant recollections. I mention the fact to show how, by a little act of kindness in the spirit of Christian charity, and costing nothing, one may do much to sweeten his passage through life.

Of other acquaintances which grew up around me, recollection embraces dear old George Thomson, the well-known correspondent of Burns, and grandfather of Mrs Charles Dickens; Lord Murray, a judge in the Court of Session, noted for his affability and his delightful literary parties; Dr Andrew Combe, the author of some admirable works on Physiology in relation to the Preservation of Health; Sir Adam Ferguson, the early acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott; Dr John Hill Burton; Mr James Simpson; and Mr Charles Maclaren, the amiable and accomplished editor of the *Scotsman*, with whom I had the pleasure of making an excursion among the extinct volcanoes of Auvergne, and of visiting

with him Gergovia, near Clermont, the desolate mountain site of what had been a fortified city, heroically defended by a tribe of Gauls against the overpowering conquest of Julius Cæsar with his Roman legionaries.

With the view of procuring distinct knowledge respecting the system of elementary education in the Netherlands, which was reputed to be singularly unsectarian, yet satisfactory to all parties, I made a deliberate tour through that country in 1838, everywhere visiting schools in my route, and bringing away a stock of information on the subject, which was published on my return home. It is gratifying for me to know that the system of elementary education now introduced into Great Britain, appears to possess some of the important qualities which I found in full operation in the schools of Holland.

Looking back to this period, I have reminiscences of an acquaintanceship with Lord Kinnaird, whom I had the pleasure of visiting, by invitation, on two separate occasions at his beautiful residence, Rossie Priory, in the Carse of Gowrie. At these visits, I met choice parties of noble and scientific persons, from whose conversation much was to be learned and appreciated. On one of these occasions, the principal scientific guest was Sir David Brewster, under whose kindly directions, some experiments in optics and photography were made for the amusement of the company.

Having written a number of articles on the subject of Emigration, I felt considerable interest in the operations of the New Zealand Land Company, which proposed to colonise New Zealand on a plan somewhat resembling the New England settlements in the seventeenth century; one settlement to be for members of the Church of England, another for Scotch Presbyterians, and so on. While on a visit to London, I procured some information on the subject from Mr Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a leading spirit in the Company's affairs. In the district set aside for the reception of Scotch settlers, it was arranged that the name of the chief town was, by way of attractiveness, to be New Edinburgh. It was no business of mine what they called the town; but without damage to the plan, I thought an improvement might be suggested, which I did as follows, in a letter to the editor of the *New Zealand Journal*, published in London, November 11, 1843: 'If not finally resolved upon, I would strongly recommend a reconsideration of the name New Edinburgh, and the adoption of another infinitely superior and yet equally allied to "Old Edinburgh." I mean the assumption of the name Dunedin, which is the ancient Celtic appellation of Edinburgh, and is now occasionally applied in poetic composition and otherwise to the northern metropolis. I would, at all events, hope that the names of places with the prefix "New" should be sparingly had recourse to. The "News" in North America are an abomination, which it has lately been proposed to sweep out of the country. It will be matter for regret if the New Zealand Company help to carry the nuisance to the territories with which it is concerned.'

The letter bore my signature—for I have made a point of never writing an anonymous letter—and the hint was taken. The name New

Edinburgh was changed to Dunedin, which it now bears. On a late occasion, September 1880, I received a complimentary letter from the Municipal Council of Dunedin which bore an interesting reference to the circumstance. It should be added, that the plan of settlement in New Zealand according to ecclesiastical distinctions, has been long since and very properly abandoned.

From this time, business transactions took me frequently to London, where I enjoyed the acquaintance of Richard Cobden, Sir James Kaye Shuttleworth, Sir James Clark, Dr Neil Arnott, David Roberts, R.A., Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, Charles Knight, the Rev. Sydney Smith, Samuel Rogers, and others. Two of these old London acquaintances still survive, Mr John Bright, M.P., and Mr Edwin Chadwick, C.B.

The manner in which I became acquainted with Sydney Smith is too remarkable to be omitted. In 1844, when residing in Greek Street, Soho, one day about noon a carriage drives up to the door; not a vehicle of the light modern sort, but an old family coach, drawn by a pair of sleek horses. From it descends an aged gentleman, who, from his shovel hat and black gaiters, is seen to be an ecclesiastical dignitary. I overhear, by the voices at the door, that I am asked for. 'Who in all the world can this be?' A few minutes solve the question. Heavy footsteps are heard deliberately ascending the antique balustraded stair. My unknown visitor is ushered in—his name announced: 'The Rev. Sydney Smith.' I hasten to receive so celebrated a personage as is befitting, and express the pleasure I have in the unexpected visit—wondering how he had discovered me.

'I heard at Rogers's, you were in town,' said he, 'and was resolved to call. Let us sit down and have a talk.'

We drew towards the fire, for the day was cold, and he continued: 'You are surprised possibly at my visit. There is nothing at all strange about it. The originator of the *Edinburgh Review* has come to see the originator of the *Edinburgh Journal*.'

I felt honoured by the remark, and delighted beyond measure with the good-natured and unceremonious observations which my visitor made on a variety of subjects. We talked of Edinburgh, and I asked him where he had lived. He said it was in Buccleuch Place, not far from Jeffrey, with an outlook behind to the Meadows. 'Ah!' he remarked, 'what charming walks I had about Arthur's Seat, with the clear mountain air blowing in one's face. I often think of that glorious scene.' I alluded to the cluster of young men—Jeffrey, Horner, Brougham, himself, and one or two others, who had been concerned in commencing the *Review* in 1802. Of these he spoke with most affection of Horner; and specified one who, from his vanity and eccentricities, could not be trusted. Great secrecy, he said, had to be employed in conducting the undertaking; and this agrees with what Lord Jeffrey told my brother. My reverend and facetious visitor made some little inquiry about my own early efforts; and he laughed when I reminded him of a jocularly of his own about studying on a little oatmeal—for that would have applied literally to my brother and to myself.

There was some more chat of this kind, and

we parted. This interview led to a few days of agreeable intercourse with Sydney Smith. By invitation, I went next morning to his house in Green Street, Grosvenor Square, to breakfast; and the day following, went with him to breakfast with a select party, which included my old and valued friend, Mr Robert Carruthers of Inverness, now deceased, at the mansion of Samuel Rogers, St James's, when there ensued a stream of witticisms and repartees for pretty nearly a couple of hours. This was assuredly the most pleasant conversational treat I ever experienced. On quitting London, I bade good-bye to Sydney Smith with extreme regret. We never met again. He died in February the following year.

There were two lady authoresses by whose acquaintanceship I felt honoured; each remarkable for delicacy of taste, discrimination of character, and facility of description, with a keen sense of humour. The first of these to be mentioned was Mrs Anna Maria Hall, the wife of Mr S. C. Hall. Of English parentage, but born and educated in Ireland, Mrs Hall was essentially Irish in her quickness of apprehension, her vivacity, and geniality of disposition. She wrote for us a large number of Stories of the Irish Peasantry, each with a distinct moral purpose, that were much appreciated by the readers of *Chambers's Journal*, of which she was always an acceptable contributor. She resided with her husband at a pretty villa, at Brompton, called 'The Rosary'; and there, every time I was in London, I was happy in making occasional visits.

The other lady authoress I have just referred to was Miss Mitford, who lived at a pleasant roadside cottage, environed by flowers and shrubs, in the neighbourhood of Reading, Berkshire. It was a short run by rail from London, and at every opportunity, I paid a visit to this charming old lady. In her character, she was a matchless specimen of a well-educated Englishwoman, correct in taste and feeling, clever and self-reliant. As a describer of rural life and scenery in their happiest and most genial aspects, she is allowed to have been unrivalled. Although considerably advanced in life, she had the liveliness and winning manners of a child. Some women never seem to grow old, and she was one of them. Her tongue ran on so incessantly concerning the details of village life, that each of my visits might have afforded the materials of a popular article. Short in stature, and with a tall, gold-headed cane in hand, she invited me to walk with her through the adjoining green lanes in the neighbourhood; at every step the trees, wild flowers, and birds, offering objects of garrulous remark. She was not the least reticent regarding her own history. She told me how, ever since girlhood, she had been thrown on her own resources, through her father, Dr Mitford's singular indiscretion and extravagance. He had spent a fortune, and even squandered twenty thousand pounds, the proceeds of a prize in the lottery. After all was gone, he had to depend on the industry of his daughter, who supported him with her pen. I have known several cases of fathers oppressing children by their heedless misconduct, but never one so bad as this. By a thriftless parent, who

preyed on his daughter's sense of filial duty, she was condemned to celibacy, and endured a struggle for existence in her old age. Yet, she was ever cheerful, and resigned to her position. Her works will always be prized as among the most precious in English literature.

There was another and younger lady authoress who furnished many contributions to the *Journal*, and whom I frequently saw in London; this was Miss Camilla Toulmin, a writer of great versatility of talent, and poetic fancy. Depending entirely on her pen, the quantity of work she got through was extraordinary. This lady still survives, and though married, and known as Mrs Newton Crosland, she to a certain extent continues her literary career—from first to last a meritorious instance of tasteful and patient industry.

As an apprentice boy, while delivering a parcel of books at a house in Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, in 1815, I was accidentally mixed up with an infuriated mob, who smashed in the windows of Sir John Marjoribanks, Bart. M.P., and Lord Provost of the city, who had rendered himself popularly offensive by sustaining the import taxes on corn. That was my first experience of what were known as the Corn Laws. For years afterwards, these Corn Laws, in the form of sliding scales and otherwise, were a continual source of discord in the country; the landlord class generally insisting that corn of all sorts should be taxed on importation; while the middle and lower classes, who acutely felt the necessity for food being as cheap as possible, insisted as strenuously that the whole Corn Laws from top to bottom were an error, and that corn should be imported free of duty. The end of the desperate struggle is well known. Sir Robert Peel, yielding to representations on the subject, and now avowedly a convert to Free Trade, carried a measure to put an end to the Corn Laws in 1846. I was present at a public evening meeting in Manchester that took place to celebrate the extinction of these odious statutes. The meeting did not break up till past midnight. When the clock struck twelve, which marked the close of the tax on corn, the whole audience rose to their feet, and uttered loud shouts of triumph and mutual congratulation. It was an interesting and memorable scene.

About this period I made a number of excursions through England, Scotland, and Ireland, for the purpose of describing the more interesting scenes and circumstances that came under notice. One of my visits was to Sunderland, in the neighbourhood of which I seized the opportunity to descend a coal-pit to inspect the workings at a depth of eighteen hundred feet. I afterwards published an account of my visit to this, I believe, the deepest coal-mine in the world. Another of my excursions was to Rochdale, to procure correct particulars regarding the co-operative system. I also visited the Channel Islands.

I had visited France several times: to see the prison discipline at Roquette and Fontre-vault; to see Voisin's method of rousing the dormant intellect of imbecile children at the Bicêtre, and so on. I again visited the country in 1849, during the Republic which ensued after the abdication of Louis-Philippe; on this occasion remaining longer than usual in Paris, and

seeing more of the domestic life of the people. For this let me acknowledge myself indebted to the Dowager Countess of Elgin—a Scottish lady of the Oswalds of Dunnikier—who by some means found me out in lodgings I had secured in the Rue de Helder, No. 2, with a splendid outlook on the Boulevard des Italiens. On several occasions I visited the Countess at her mansion in the neighbourhood of the Rue du Bac, on the south side of the Seine, and which had been a palace of some pretension in the days of the old monarchy. Here she introduced me to her two accomplished daughters, one of whom, Lady Augusta Bruce, was subsequently married to the very Reverend Dr Stanley, Dean of Westminster.

The evening parties of the Countess, composed of a mixture of English and French, were quiet, simple, and effective. There was no parade or finery; the numerous guests, lounging about the floor of a large saloon, or seated on sofas, having their enjoyment in conversation. There was no other festive entertainment than a cup of tea; and as no one seemed to attend with the view of eating and drinking, this was apparently sufficient—the whole thing forming a singular contrast to the extravagant doings of Swellodom which one occasionally sees in England. At these parties, I met with persons of distinction connected with the government, among whom I may mention M. Lamartine and M. Léon Faucher. Lamartine, with his tall, elegant figure, and composed manner, was, I think, the most remarkable man I was ever introduced to, or conversed with. I spoke to him, and complimented him on his wonderfully beautiful work, the *Voyage en Orient*—Travels in the East—which had been translated for circulation in England. M. Léon Faucher was greatly more conversable. He inquired into and was interested in our system of poor-laws, municipal government, and other topics connected with social economy, on which I did my best to give him some information.

On one of these evenings, I was introduced to a young Frenchman, son of a noted revolutionist during the Reign of Terror, who had afterwards saved his life by hiding himself, and changing his name, until he could again appear publicly. He had recently died, and his whole effects were about to be sold, in order that the proceeds might be equally divided among his family. The articles were said to be curious; and such I found to be the case, on going to see them in an old dignified mansion, near the Temple. To the antique furniture, I paid little attention; my interest was concentrated in a large saloon, containing a billiard-table, on which was spread out for inspection a large variety of small articles, along with some old books and papers that were deemed historically precious. My attention became riveted on an open sheet of paper with the identical proclamation which Robespierre had begun to write at the Hôtel de Ville when his assailants burst in on him, and he was shot through the jaw. He had got only the length of scrawling the words, 'Courage, mes compatriotes,' when being struck, the pen fell from his hand, and big drops of blood were scattered over the paper. Bearing these marks of discoloration, how strange a memorial of the horrors of 1794! I said to

the young gentleman, who claimed an interest in the property, that if the articles were sent to be disposed of by public auction in London, they would certainly bring a larger price than if sold in Paris. To this hint, he bowed, but made no remark. I presume the collection was broken up and sold shortly afterwards.

To show me the way to this ancient out-of-the-way mansion, I was obligingly accompanied by my friend, Mr Mackellar Robertson, a Scotchman settled in Paris, in a street near the Port St-Denis, from whom I experienced numerous acts of hospitality, and who was untiring in his friendly attentions to his countrymen. His residence, forming a commodious and prettily furnished *étage*; also his wife, Madame Robertson; and a young lady cousin, along with their pet dog, Buck, a species of Skye terrier, of great sagacity, and affectionate disposition, are printed indelibly on my memory. The group was unique. All are now dead and gone. The faithful Buck attended the funeral of each member of the family in succession. When the last had disappeared, he lay down in an agony of despair, and with a mournful cry, which spoke the depth of his emotion, expired. It was a striking instance of the attachment of the dog to those who had been kind to him, and whom he loved. No one will say that dogs do not sometimes die of a broken heart!

In the course of a conversation with Mr Robertson concerning the political condition of France, I said I could not recollect having anywhere seen how the post-letters in Paris were delivered, if delivered at all, on the days when fighting took place on the streets, and cannon were firing at the barricades set up by revolutionists; that I did not quite understand how the postmen managed on these occasions. In reply, I learned that in the execution of their duty, the postmen on such occasions ordinarily went their rounds as usual; that when they came to a place where there was desperate fighting, they took refuge in a doorway or common-stair for a few minutes until the volley was fired, and then resumed their perambulations; that these Frenchmen, in fact, encountered dangers of this sort with marvellous bravery, though often running extraordinary risks. One day in which the fighting had been very severe on the adjacent Boulevard, the postman arrived with letters, and pointing to a round hole which had been made by a bullet in passing through his hat, only jocularly remarked that it was *fort drôle*. Had the bullet passed a few inches lower, the poor fellow must have been inevitably shot dead, an innocent victim of revolutionary violence.

The courtesies I received from the Countess of Elgin during my visit to Paris in 1849, have left very agreeable reminiscences. This much respected lady died in 1860. As regards the general appearance of affairs, I could see that things were in a most unsettled condition. At times, I expected some public disorder, and almost wished myself safe in England. The streets were frequently thronged with long lines of National Guards shouting and singing, and with flowers fantastically stuck on the ends of their muskets. They seemed to me troops under no proper control, and in a state of semi-mental derangement. Looking out on the Boulevards to scenes of this description, I felt that a crisis

of some sort could not be long postponed. The *coup d'état* and assumption of despotic power by Napoleon III. did not at all surprise me. A tyrannical despotism has in all ages been the natural sequence of impending anarchy.

In 1853, I crossed the Atlantic in a Cunard steamer, and visited Nova Scotia, Canada, and the United States, of which an account was afterwards published. What I saw of the growth of large cities, of vigorous manufacturing industries, and other evidences of prosperity in the States, was exceedingly gratifying. The kindly hospitality extended to me everywhere was heartily appreciated. By Franklin Pierce, then President of the United States, I was affably received at the White House. My brother, Robert, afterwards visited the States; he also made an excursion through Norway, and visited Iceland, of all which he wrote an account in the *Journal*.

At the time I commenced the *Journal*, the duty on paper paid by the manufacturer was threepence per pound-weight, which formed a grievous burden on every sort of publication. About 1840, publishers generally began to make earnest efforts to get rid of this tax, which pressed with special cruelty on the cheaper class of works. In this movement, which on a lesser scale resembled the Corn Law agitation, I took a somewhat conspicuous part. There were good reasons for my doing so. The *Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts*, issued by W. & R. Chambers, and which extended to twenty shilling volumes, with a circulation of eighty thousand copies, was absolutely choked to death by the tax. The anticipated profits on the work were literally nothing, for the whole had been absorbed by the duties on paper. The government, with no trouble or risk, having got all the profits on this popular little work, it was given up. Cases of this kind were impressed on the attention of the legislature. Mr Milner Gibson, M.P., zealously helped the movement, which was at length successful. The repeal of the paper-duty took effect on October 1, 1861. Already, in 1853, the advertisement duty, eighteenpence each, had been removed; and in 1855, the newspaper stamp was abolished; wherefore, with the abolition of the paper-duty, 1861, the press in all its departments was set thoroughly free from fiscal exactions. In these few facts, young people will learn how newspapers have been so wondrously cheapened and extended in circulation.

In the spring and summer of 1862, I was able to fulfil a long-desired wish to visit Italy. The journey was not easily performed, for there were still few railways. I had to begin by being dragged in a diligence amidst the snow, across Mont Cenis; and there were other difficulties. But I was rewarded by the visit to Rome, Florence, Milan, Naples, Pompeii, and Vesuvius; of all which I gave an account in a volume entitled *Something of Italy*.

At home, a new phase of life awaited me. In 1865, the citizens of Edinburgh were in want of a Lord Provost, and, to my surprise, fixed on me for the distinguished office. I had hitherto shrunk from taking any prominent part in public affairs; and on the present occasion only acceded to the general solicitations from a wish, if possible, to promote certain measures of social improvement. From a consideration of

the state of large cities, I had arrived at the conviction, that the insalubrity, the vice and misery that prevail among the more abject classes, are traceable, in a great measure, to that inveterately wrong system of house construction which consists in narrow courts and alleys branching from the main thoroughfares. I felt that if I could possibly obliterate by legislation the hideous resorts in these quarters, a good deed would be done. Hence, with the able assistance I received from Mr J. D. Marwick, town-clerk, and a small but faithful band of adherents, the Improvement Act of 1867. It is not for me to pronounce an opinion concerning this municipal measure. The other day, taking up a London newspaper designated *Land*, I observed the following statement: 'No fewer than two thousand eight hundred unwholesome houses have been pulled down in Edinburgh since 1867, and over half a million have been spent since that year in city improvements. In 1863, the death-rate was twenty-six per thousand per annum; now it is twenty per thousand.'

One of the duties of the Lord Provost, as is well known, is that of ceremoniously delivering a Burgess ticket to distinguished strangers to whom the Magistrates and Council have voted the freedom of the city. It fell to my lot during my period of office to present this token of citizenship to several persons of eminence; among others to Lord Napier of Magdala; Mr John Bright, M.P.; and Mr Disraeli, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. The presentation to Mr Disraeli took place on the 30th October 1867, in the presence of a very large concourse of citizens. On the previous day, he was entertained at a public banquet; on which occasion, in proposing the health of the Magistrates and good wishes to the city generally, Mr Disraeli was pleased to refer in terms so eulogistic to the literary operations in which I had been concerned, that I shrink from copying them from the newspapers of the day in which they appeared.

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh happens to be an ex-officio member of the Commission of Northern Lighthouses, a body invested with the duty of managing all the lighthouses on the seacoast of Scotland and Isle of Man. The Commissioners own a powerful and well-equipped steamer called the *Pharos*, employed on matters connected with the service; and in which a select number of them make an excursion annually, with a view to inspection of a certain number of the lighthouses. On two occasions, I was elected to be one of the party. My first trip was in 1866, when I was taken along the west coast of Scotland, among the Outer Hebrides, and had an opportunity of visiting that wonderful triumph of art, the Skerryvore lighthouse, rising to the height of a hundred and fifty feet, up which I had the satisfaction of climbing to the top. This is one of my very marked reminiscences.

My second excursion, which took place in 1867, was along the east coast of Scotland, from the Firth of Forth and Bell Rock lighthouses, to the Orkney and Shetland Islands. Independently of the satisfaction of seeing these islands under very advantageous circumstances, I had the pleasure of visiting the scenery described by Sir Walter Scott in his romance of the *Pirate*; a pleasure somewhat enhanced by the considera-

tion that Scott had visited the islands in circumstances not unlike my own; for his voyage was made in company with the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses in 1814. By way of amusement, I wrote an account of my two excursions in the *Pharos*, which appeared in the *Journal*, and was afterwards embodied in a small volume printed for private circulation.

When, at the end of three years, my period of office expired, I allowed myself to be re-elected for a second period, in order if possible to effect a particular and unexplained purpose. Although authorised by Parliament, the operation of the Improvement Act depended on the decision of the trustees, such being the members of the Town Council. In point of fact, certain new streets through dense and insalubrious neighbourhoods were relinquished, in spite of all my exertions. This I do not cease to regret; for had the Act been carried out in its integrity, the death-rate in the city would, in all likelihood, have now been only fifteen instead of twenty per thousand per annum. A proposed new thoroughfare, now known as Jeffrey Street, was still in doubt when I entered office the second time. I knew there was a party determined, if possible, to prevent the formation of the street. My object, on the contrary, was to employ all reasonable means to get the street formed. I therefore returned to office to battle the point under perhaps improved auspices. The tug of war came off on the 16th of July 1869, when I fortunately carried a motion to form the street in question. Having thus effected my object, I at the end of the first year gave in my resignation, and was glad to retire into private life.

The quietude of later times, interspersed with occasional visits, for the sake of health, to the south of France, was painfully signalised by the decease of my life-long coadjutor. Dr Robert Chambers died at St Andrews in the spring of 1871, from what seemed to be a failure of nature, due to excessive mental exertion, leaving a family to mourn his loss. His Moral and Humorous Essays, written in his early strength and power of observation, gave a certain tone to the *Journal*, which, with other characteristics, the work, it may be hoped, will steadily maintain. His more elaborate productions were the *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, 3 vols. 8vo; the *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, in which he was assisted by Mr Carruthers of Inverness; and the *Book of Days*, 2 vols. 8vo, the execution of which, and the copious investigations required for it at the British Museum, no doubt contributed to his death-blow.

My own literary efforts in recent times have been confined chiefly to essays on subjects of social concern for the *Journal*. A *History of Peeblesshire*, a work involving some historical and antiquarian research, was executed by me as a matter of amusement during a residence of two or three summers in the country. It appeared in 1864; and was followed by the *Memoir* of my brother, with autobiographic sketches, 1872. That, so far, closes my account. Obligated, by advanced age, and an infirm state of health, to live almost the life of a recluse, the more active professional duties connected with the conducting of the firm, along with the editing of the *Journal*, have for some years past been in the hands of my nephew, Mr R. Chambers.

An incident never for a moment contemplated was the offer by the University of Edinburgh of conferring on me the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, which was bestowed on me in a way too complimentary to be rejected or readily forgotten, in 1872. More lately, another species of honour came unexpectedly in my way. In June 1881, Mr W. E. Gladstone, M.P. and Prime Minister, made an offer to me of a knighthood. This I respectfully declined.

I have now presented a sketch of the leading particulars of my long and busy life, leaving out matters of private detail which could be of no public interest. I have also briefly explained how *Chambers's Journal* originated, and what followed under the firm of W. & R. Chambers. Possibly it may be thought I have been too precise in specifying the date and circumstances connected with the commencement of the *Journal*; but the singular confusion of ideas which seems to prevail on the subject must be my excuse. I see it constantly stated that the *Penny Magazine* preceded *Chambers's Journal* as a cheap periodical, which is distinctly the reverse of the truth, and that papers of a greatly more recent growth were the pioneers of this species of literature. From what has been stated, it would be hard to determine what paper was the pioneer. But I am entitled to repeat, as a matter of historical truth, that *Chambers's Journal* sprung into existence on the 4th of February 1832, and has outlasted hundreds of rivals which, under the best advantages, courted public favour.

Whether as a personal or bibliographic narrative, the sketch is possibly not without interest, from its throwing a certain light on a branch of human knowledge. It has certainly been unaccompanied by brag or pretension, and is left to take its chance in sweeping along the great vista of Time. As has been already said, in the course of a long life the world

has been prodigiously changed, and I am not unconscious of being changed with it. How long, with care, existence may be protracted, I am unable to say; but be the period long or short, my feelings remain identified with *Chambers's Journal*, which it was my fortune to originate, and in the cherishing of which my literary efforts, such as they are, will not, at fitting opportunities, fail to be exerted.

With little to be grateful for as regards treatment at school, I have from various considerations ever entertained an affectionate remembrance of the place of my birth on the banks of the Tweed. In 1859, I presented the small town with an Institution, designed for moral and intellectual improvement, consisting of a Public Library of fifteen thousand volumes, a Museum of Art, a Reading Room, and a Hall for lectures and public assemblages. Though the gift has been seemingly prized, I should, after a lapse of twenty-two years, have some difficulty in saying whether its originally anticipated advantages have to any material extent been practically realised. Another of my acts in later times, which I merely glance at for the sake of rounding off a too long narrative, has been the restoration of that fine, old, historical monument, the Cathedral Church of St Giles, Edinburgh, which, for more than three hundred years, had been allowed to sink into a discreditable condition. The work is now considerably advanced under the direction of a skilled architect, Mr W. Hay; and I trust that God may grant me life and sufficient health to complete the undertaking. I have, however, made arrangements to secure the completion of the works, in the event of my decease.

To the great number of friends who have been looking forward to some sort of address from me on the present occasion, I send a cordial greeting.

W. CHAMBERS.

VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

CHAPTER III. CONTINUED.—LOVE'S FIRST DRAUGHT IS SWEET ENOUGH; IT IS ONLY IN THE AFTER-TASTE THAT WE DETECT ITS BITTERNESS.

MR JOLLY's newly occupied residence lay, as the crow flies, not more than a mile and a half from Lumby Hall. From the roof of one house, the chimney-pots of the other could be descried; but the lower ridges of Daffin Head lay between them; and the Grange, like the Hall, looked southward, and was protected from northerly winds. Not half a mile from the gates of the smaller house, light craft could lie comfortably at anchor; but they were hidden from view by a little mound, and a feathery belt of firs, whose sombre and unchanging green stood out against the pale blue of the hazy summer sky. Between this small anchorage and the front of Lumby Hall, rose the crags of Daffin Head, round which many a white sail floated into sight in the summer weather, when the ranks of pleasure closed up alongside the ranks of trade. In days that came later, Valentine Strange took harbour within the shadow of those dusky pines, bearing within himself a

deeper shadow than they could throw, a shadow which widened from himself, as such things will, and cast its gloom on many. Now, beyond the shadow of the gloomy pines, the sea murmured in the sunshine and the sea-mew called, and the white sails glittered, and the distant haze trembled in the heat, and there was no sense of anything but rest and peace above this quiet haven.

But rest and peace are for the restful and peaceful, and the most exquisite of Nature's moods is caviare to the inquiet mind. Poor Gerard's heart beat dolefully as he rode by his companion's side to meet the goddess who was henceforth for so long to rule over him. Yet shall not the reader, if I can help it, picture to himself a mien disturbed, a countenance unsteady. The tremors Gerard felt were inward and were hidden; and the little man riding with him could not have guessed, keen as he was, that Gerard had a tremor to hide.

It is probable that a handsome man cannot be seen to greater advantage than on horseback. Gerard had a noble figure and a well-set head—a trifle too haughty in its carriage, as I have written already—though the frank good-humour

of his face had something of a denial for that haughty bearing. His face was plain; but if you will think of it, you may be surprised to discover how little that matters in your estimate of a man, so long as the expression is one of openness and sweet temper. A young lady looking idly through the open spaces of a Venetian blind, thought well of the young man's presence as he swept up the avenue and alighted at the door. A young lady with wonderful violet eyes, a young lady of very lovely form and exquisite feature and colour, and attired in a morning dress of pure white, with lace ruffles at the wrists and throat. Her brown hair rippled over her shapely head, and grew low upon her broad fair forehead, as in Mr Power's charming bust of Clytie. She stood a minute to look at the new arrival, and recognised him. Then she turned, and for half a minute surveyed herself in a mirror, and finding herself faultless at all points, glided to her own room to add a touch to perfection.

When she descended and met Gerard in the cool dimness of the morning-room, and the bald-headed man said, 'My sister Constance,' the thing seemed ludicrous. Constance, muslin and laces and all, looked as though she might have risen, like Aphrodite, from the white sea-foam, a creature of inspiration, and not of vulgar birth. No such fancies were likely to cluster around her brother, who was decidedly unromantic in aspect.

'You have ridden from the Manor House at Brierham?' she said. 'Then I am sure you must be hungry. Shall I order luncheon?'

Now, as a conversational effort, there was nothing especially remarkable in this utterance; but I doubt greatly whether Gerard had, up to that time, ever listened to human speech which so pleased him. It was spoken with a smile which was delicious to look at. The clear silver voice came through such smiling gates of pearl and coral, such exquisite white teeth, such beautiful lips, that nothing it could say could be commonplace.

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires,
As old Time makes these decay,
So his love shall waste away.

Is that so? Always? Perhaps it depends on the nature of the lover, with whom, in some rare and happy instances, age cannot wither, nor custom stale the beauties that won his heart in youthful days. Beauty is a good gift, and I will not decry it. With a heart already prepared to yield, as Gerard's was, such rare and supreme charms as those he saw before him were sure of victory. He drank in Constance's words, and unconsciously stored them in his memory; so that years later he recalled the little commonplaces, the nothings of politeness and good-breeding spoken on that happy morning. His eyes were hungry for her face, when

he forced them to look away, lest his gaze should embarrass her. He was too agitated to be happy, yet he thought himself so. Love's first draught is sweet enough; it is only in the aftertaste that we detect its bitterness.

'The hour approaches Tam maun ride.' It comes, that inexorable time, when we must go back to harness from the pleasant reaches of the river and idle summer days; or to our own lonely rooms, after the society of our best intimates; or into the wide Inane, which dwells everywhere save where our love may be.

'We shall see you often, I trust, Mr Lumby.' Thus the elder Jolly, a brown and withered man of five-and-fifty, with a dreary bent towards table oratory. Gerard would fain have said something, though no more than a word, to tell Constance how heavily time bade fair to drag with him until he should meet her again; but he restrained himself, and said good-day politely, and no more. So, he loved and rode away. The inland-reaching meadows, the yellow sands that ran up from the sea to meet their sparser grasses, the familiar headlands, and the bay—how dreary they all looked to the new lover's eyes! There was an altogether novel restlessness upon him, and the fiery Rupert felt it, and fretted beneath it.

'Do you want to gallop?' said Gerard. 'Gallop, then!' He laid the reins loose, and the horse shot out across the turf with an exultant bound, and his master encouraged him with voice and hand. But not Rupert's noblest pace could carry Gerard away from himself. Says the quaint old songster:

I attempt from Love's sickness to fly, but in vain,
For I am myself my own fever and pain.

And Gerard was as near himself as ever when he checked Rupert at the foot of the hill which led homeward.

'Father,' said the love-tormented youth, an hour later, 'I think I shall run up to town to-morrow. There's nothing doing down here just now. Strange has gone away yachting, and I'm a trifle dull.'

'Very well, my lad,' said Mr Lumby. It was his almost invariable answer to any expression of Gerard's will; and indeed, the father's continual indulgence might have done much damage to a mental constitution less firmly knit than Gerard's.

'I meant to go next week,' said Gerard, 'and I may as well run up at once. The close of the season is coming; and I shall miss everybody if I delay much longer.'

'Very well, my lad,' said Lumby senior once more. 'Shall you want any money?'

'No,' said Gerard; 'I think not. If I should, I'll call on Garling.'

'Very well, my lad,' assented the father once again. Garling was Mr Lumby's right-hand man, the captain of his host. Mr Lumby's father had bred Garling to business, and he had grown up into control side by side with the present head of the firm. He rather looked down on the younger partners; but since they looked up to him, and had been trained to business under him, things went more smoothly than they commonly do when subordinate officers take the upper hand.

In the evening, after dinner, Gerard strolled from the house, and almost unconsciously walked towards Daffin Head, and sitting down within sight of the Grange, gave himself up to his own thoughts. Two days before, he had felt no especial interest in that eligible and desirable country residence. He had been familiar with it from childhood, and had known the people who had lived in it, a rather low and horsey set, who had come to grief upon the turf a year ago, and had disappeared, unregretted, from the county horizon. He had shunned the place all his life, except for the interchange of mere formal civility; and now it had suddenly become the very heart of his world, and began to draw him to itself, as though it were the seat of the centre of gravitation. He sat and looked at it as the shadows gathered, and in a little while lights began to twinkle in its windows. Through the dusk he strolled on again nearer and nearer by devious ways, until he passed the lodge gates. There was a possibility that young Jolly might be straying thereabouts, and might meet him and ask him in. At that fancy he turned unaccountably shy, and began to dread a chance encounter. Then meeting nobody, he felt disappointed that his dread had not been realised; and in that mood, with a vague hungry feeling superadded, he walked home again.

His youth and health and the open-air life he led were enough to stave off for the present that attendant upon first-love, by doctors called *Insomnia*. He slept soundly till the morning grew gray; and then he began to dream again of the violet eyes, and awoke restless and disquieted. I think that a manly youngster is always pretty certain to show fight in a matter of this kind, and not to yield himself tamely and without a struggle. It was at this time that Gerard, making brief preparation for his visit to town, resolved against the tenant of his heart, and turned rebel against Love. But the fight was unequal, and he was driven from the field of defiance with all his forces routed. He bought the promised presents for Milly; and surveying the treasures of the jeweller's trays, wished that he had the right to buy up the stock for Constance and lay its riches at her feet. He made calls, and received cards for the last receptions of the dying season, and was dull at all of them. He went to the Opera, and Patti's liquid notes flowed unheard about his ears. He went to see Toole, and yawned dismally through a three-act farce, called a comedy, at which everybody in the house save himself shouted with laughter. Then, at the end of a week, he went home again, and made Milly happy by his presents, and happier still by the promised waltzing lessons.

We become so soon habituated and inured to any new method of feeling or thinking, that in a day or two the new way seems as familiar as the old. Gerard might have been in love for a year by the time the Jollies gave their house-warming dinner, such a part of his life had love become. He dressed for that event with extraordinary care, and began to think slightly of his own personal appearance. Until then, barring that general satisfaction with himself which is common to youth, he had not thought about it at all, and his new opinions abased him. Constance did the

honours of the house like a queen, he thought; and indeed she was the object of much encomium. Such beauty could scarcely go unapproved; and it was the general opinion that Miss Jolly was a very charming addition to the county society. Perhaps it was only natural that the ladies should express less enthusiasm than the men; but they were reserved in their judgments, and refrained from the encomiastic flights in which members of the more impressionable sex indulged.

Dinner over, Gerard manoeuvred to be near Constance, and found himself assisted by Milly. There was nothing easier or less embarrassing in the world than to talk to Milly; and that young lady having none of the shyness which Gerard felt for Constance, led the way to where she stood, taking the irresolute lover with her. It was as if a mastiff should have taken shelter behind a pigeon, this big tanned Gerard wavering deviously towards his love under cover of the dainty Milly. Constance once reached, was gracious enough. There was no chance for a confidential talk, for she played hostess, and was busy with her father's guests. Yet may the historic Muse record their converse, if but as a guide to future lovers, as chance conversations are set forth in foreign phrase-books for the help of tourists.

Gerard. Very warm, is it not, Miss Jolly?

Constance. Very warm indeed.—My dear Mrs Weatherley, how do you do?

[Mrs Weatherley, after sundry commonplace, retires.

Gerard. You were not in town at the end of the season?

Constance. No.

Gerard. Everything was very dull. Dullest time I can remember. I was longing to be back in the country all the time.

Constance. Were you indeed?

Gerard (beholding an opportunity for saying something brilliantly complimentary, but not quite knowing what to say, or how to say it). Yes.

Constance. My dear Miss Pennfeather, I have so been wishing to see you.

[Gush. Miss Pennfeather retires.

Gerard. I hope you'll excuse me, Miss Jolly, but you must really allow me to congratulate you upon the decorations. I'm rather a judge of that sort of thing, and they're really charming.

Constance. I am so glad you like them.

Milly. Aunty is beckoning me with her fan. Will you give me your arm?

[Gerard bows to his idol, and retires.

Constance. My dear Agnes, I am charmed to see you.—How do you do, Mr Dolby?

[The strains of music overpower all voices.

Gerard piloted Milly across the room, and surrendered her to the care of his mother, and then retired to a doorway, against which he lounged, looking on the glittering scene with no lightness of heart. He reviewed the conversation above recorded, and wrote himself down an ass for his share in it. How different he was from Constance! How far removed from her—how much beneath her! The unprejudiced observer fails to see the truth of all this. Miss Jolly was very beautiful, but she was not a Minerva for wisdom. There was nothing in her converse to dazzle us who are not in love with her. Yet let no youth or maiden smile superior over Gerard's

raptures and his self-disdain. You, who laugh, have yet to go through your experiences. We who are middle-aged, have had *our* day, and we remember; not without unavailing longing for the past.

(To be continued.)

MY HIGHLAND COLLIE AND HER ADOPTED KITTENS.

A TRUE STORY.

THE story of Rollo and her contest with the gray cat and the kittens, recorded in No. 921 of your *Journal*, has reminded me of an affectionate Highland collie which adopted two kittens under perilous and painful circumstances.

In the days of my youth, no iron bands of railway had bound North and South Britain together. Drovers of Highland cattle passed through my native village every autumn on their way to London; and the sagacity and fidelity of the Scotch collie dogs excited my admiration. At that time, my father farmed in three counties, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Lincolnshire; and the interchange of stock from county to county and from farm to farm necessitated the use of a good shepherd-dog. Much of my time in youth was spent in assisting to drive the cattle and sheep. How often I coveted a dog of the true Highland breed! But so strong and mutual was the affection between drover and dog, that no gold would part them. And as the dogs I refer to did not understand English, and I was a stranger to Gaelic, no purchase would have been profitable.

One day, as my father and I were riding on the old Roman Road, called by us 'The Fosse Road,' which skirts the borders of the counties of Nottingham and Leicester, we met a drove of Highland oxen quietly travelling and grazing on the rich and luxuriant grass, where no tool of Macadam had lifted a sod or broken a stone. The drover and his dog were standing by the side of an ox which had fallen down sick in the rear of the herd. Which of the two, Sandie or his dog, was the more afflicted, I cannot say; for while the drover stood mutely pondering over the fallen ox what to do, the dog was licking the face of the poor beast in tenderest sympathy. My father put the drover out of all trouble by proposing to take care of the ox. With many thanks, the drover left the beast under our care. In a few hours it was able to rise; and we put it in a large pasture close to the place where it had fallen down. The ox speedily recovered; and, in full sympathy with our Scottish ancestry, we made a pet of the beast for Scotland's sake. In course of time the drover came as usual, and was overflowing with gratitude for the kindness shown to the animal. As nothing could be accepted beyond a fee to our shepherd, the Highland drover insisted on giving something more in return. He appealed to me, and asked me what he should give. I replied: 'Bring me

a Highland shepherd's pup next summer.' With an expression of delight, he promised.

The next summer, the grateful drover walked into our house, and pulled out of a small side wallet a veritable Highland pup, and after saluting it with a hearty kiss, put it into my hands with a prayer that it might prove as 'guid as its mither.' I called it Gipsy. It became to me as a sister, and lay in my arms by night, was carried on my saddle by day, or followed at my heels when sufficiently strong to go about the fields. To say that Gipsy understood my words in reference to her duty, is no exaggeration; and to record all her excellences and fidelity would lead me from my story.

Riding home one evening with Gipsy at my pony's heels, I saw a group of boys standing by the side of a bridge, throwing stones into the brook, and shouting, as lads do when hunting water-rats. I found that the object of their sport was two kittens, which they had thrown into the water; and the attempt made to escape by the little creatures was fun to the cruel lads. I saw that the kittens must be either stoned or drowned; and, pitying the helpless things, I drove away the lads, and asked Gipsy to fetch them out of the water for me. She entered into the work as heartily as if a drop of my pity had been instilled into her nature. She laid them alive at my pony's feet; and then rearing herself up to my stirrup, she put each kitten into my hand. I put them into my coat-pockets and rode home. A little new milk and a warm bed by the fireside soon brought back life and play. To my surprise, Gipsy, instead of retiring alone to her own bed, took the two kittens with her, and nestling down in her quiet way, allowed them to lie all night cuddled in beside her. In the course of a few days I found, to my surprise, that Gipsy was rich in milk, and the kittens sucking away as heartily as if she had been their mother!

As Gipsy had been allowed to keep but one litter of pups, and the lactiferous period had long since passed away, it being thirteen months since the weaning of her last pup, I was astonished to see how her generous nature had responded to her sympathy for the half-drowned kittens, and how nature itself had so strangely assisted in the good work. The sight of Gipsy suckling her kittens was the attraction of the village, and the talk of the farmers in the neighbourhood.

The kittens grew rapidly into good-sized cats. But alas for Gipsy! her end was tragic. In the early harvest-time of the following year, we were taking in a stack of old wheat infested with rats, and had called off three Irish labourers from their reaping to assist us. The rats were numerous; and one of the Irishmen was more enthusiastic in the sport than his fellows. Armed with his blackthorn shillelah, Paddy made havoc with the rats. Alas! one misdirected blow from his shillelah fell upon Gipsy's head and stretched her lifeless!

There was universal mourning in all the household. I am not ashamed to say that I wept bitterly, and deplored the loss of her friendship far more than the loss of her usefulness with the flocks and the herds. Years have passed away since I buried Gipsy beneath the lilac trees of the garden; friend after friend has departed this

life; yet the strokes of repeated bereavements have not altogether effaced from my remembrance the pangs which I suffered by the untimely death of my faithful Highland collie.

A MYSTERIOUS DUEL IN 1770.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

COLONEL DACRE took the deepest interest in this remarkable duel, and declared he would use every available measure, privately and officially, through the Embassies, to try to discover the name and position of the deceased. He impressed upon me how important a personage I was in the matter, having been the one solitary witness of the sanguinary scene; made me tell him again and again the whole of the circumstances of the fight down to the minutest detail; and seemed not a little pleased at my animated description of the duel, and knowledge of the use of the sword, as well as what he was pleased to call the clear and intelligent answers I gave to his searching questions. I may be pardoned—writing now years after, and as quite an old man—this little bit of vanity; but the recollection of it is as vivid as if it had happened but yesterday, instead of half a century ago.

The coroner's inquest was held the same afternoon; and I felt all the importance of my position as the only available witness of the actual death. Of course, there could be but one verdict, and that was speedily recorded. In a couple of days, the burial took place in a vault in the village church, at the suggestion of Colonel Dacre; for, he said, inquiries might lead to the discovery of his name and family; and it might be ultimately necessary again to produce the body for identification. All the village and neighbourhood turned out to witness the funeral procession from the inn to the church, Colonel Dacre having himself undertaken the whole of the arrangements; and he, my father, myself, the doctor and the landlord, acting as mourners, followed the coffin to its last resting-place. An inventory of the property and clothing belonging to the deceased having been made, the whole was taken formal possession of by the colonel, in his capacity of magistrate.

A consultation was then held as to the next steps to be taken; and Colonel Dacre invited my father and me to dine with him at his old Manor-house that day, in order to mature their plans, which were ultimately carried out. Paragraphs were inserted in both country and London papers relating the story of the duel, and describing the deceased very minutely, and asking for information. The French, Spanish, and Portuguese Embassies were communicated with, and inquiries made as to whether any nobleman or gentleman of name or rank was reported missing. All this was not only done, but a great deal more; and in process of time, answers were duly received from all quarters, but with the same utterly unsatisfactory result. It was all to no purpose; nothing was discovered, and no light thrown upon the strange mystery. Colonel Dacre then wrote to the makers of the sword, watch, and hat, whose names and addresses in Paris those

articles bore, detailing the circumstances of the duel, and describing the person of the deceased. But the answers received were, that as many of those articles were continually sold to young gallants of fashion without even a knowledge of their names, it was simply impossible to give any information, or even conjecture, on the subject. Subsequently, Colonel Dacre laid the whole case before the Home Office authorities; and, not to weary the reader further, I may add that everything was done, and every possible means adopted, to discover who the deceased really was, but without the smallest result.

Speculation, of course, was rife; and various theories were started on the subject. Was the deceased some foreign adventurer? Or was he a sort of gentleman gambler, detected perhaps in some flagrant act of cheating, which might have led to a quarrel? Or was it some love affair? Or some political entanglement? The last two suppositions were perhaps favoured by the evident anxiety shown by the unfortunate man's companions to secure the packet of papers from his breast. Ordinary every-day papers would more probably be carried in the pocket, and not concealed inside the bosom of the shirt. Then again, he had, by his expensive and elaborate dress, evidently associated with gentlemen, and had been considered in the light of a gentleman, by being permitted the privilege of a duel—a privilege only accorded by gentlemen to their equals. Then again, who were the cavalry officers, and how came they there? The nearest cavalry barracks were at York and at Lancaster, both places very many miles distant from the scene of action.

But conjecture only wore itself out; all was dark and impenetrable uncertainty; the beginning and the end were alike lost in the deepest mystery.

Exactly fifty years after the duel—that is to say in the year 1820—when I was sixty years of age, and vicar of Wakerham, I was asked by a very dear friend to take his place as special preacher in aid of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, at the parish church of Keldon, in a distant part of the county, of which the Rev. Desmond Hiffernan was the vicar. The date of the approaching Sunday I found was the 19th of July, a date only too well remembered by me.

I duly arrived at Keldon vicarage the previous Saturday afternoon, and was received by the vicar with the utmost cordiality. He was an Irishman by birth, and a man of genial polished manners. He led the way at once into a lofty and handsome drawing-room, which I had no sooner entered, than my eyes and attention were alike instantly riveted on a beautifully executed oil portrait which occupied the end of the room. It represented a cavalry officer, of tall and elegant proportions, standing by his horse. He wore the uniform of half a century before, namely, a gold-laced three-cornered cocked-hat, a scarlet cloak, jack-boots, and long heavy sword. I looked earnestly at it, whilst busy memory carried me back just half a century, to a bright moonlight night, and the bowling-green of a little country inn, and the terrible tragedy there enacted. Yes; the more I looked, the more convinced I felt. There were

the finely cut aristocratic features, the tall grand figure, nay, the identical uniform. It must be he! I was recalled from my reverie by the vicar, who, observing my fixed and earnest gaze, said, with a sigh, looking at the picture: 'My uncle Dennis—Captain Dennis Hiffennan. He was aide-de-camp to General Montgomery; and was killed, poor fellow, with the General, at the attack on Quebec in 1780.'

'Was he not a very tall and finely built man?' I asked.

'Six feet four and a half without his shoes; and I don't know *how* many inches across the chest; and a perfect Apollo in shape and figure.'

'It is a very striking likeness, surely,' I said.

'O yes,' replied the vicar—'admirable. It is considered one of Gainsborough's happiest efforts. But, may I ask, did you ever see him, as you seem so much interested?'

'Yes,' I replied, speaking very slowly, and with my eyes still fixed on the portrait. 'I certainly did see him once, and only once—for I am sure I cannot be mistaken—exactly fifty years ago—to-morrow will be the very day—and under circumstances so peculiar and romantic, that, if you like, I will relate them.'

To this the vicar, who expressed himself deeply interested, readily agreed; and seating ourselves near the open window, I gave him a detailed account of the duel and all that followed it; and I then inquired whether he had ever heard of the occurrence.

'If my father,' said the vicar, 'the late Colonel Hiffennan, had been alive, he, no doubt, could have told us all about it, for he was always in his brother's confidence. My uncle Dennis, I'm afraid, was a terrible fellow, always in scrapes or mischief of some kind or other; but warm-hearted, noble, and generous to a fault.'

After a pause, during which the vicar looked meditatively at the portrait, he said: 'Now you have mentioned the circumstance, you seem to have awakened a sort of indistinct recollection of my having heard my father speak of a duel fought by a great friend of my uncle's, a Yorkshire squire, at which my uncle assisted as second; that the adversary was killed; and that his dead body was left just where he fell, but against the strong remonstrances of my uncle. If I am not mixing up several of Uncle Dennis's questionable adventures—for they were only too numerous, I am sorry to confess—I have an idea that the opponent was a French West Indian, a man of great wealth, but an unprincipled libertine, and an inveterate gambler. One thing I very well remember often to have heard, and that was, that my uncle's friend had a beautiful but flighty wife; but whether it was the lady, or cards, or politics, that occasioned the quarrel, I cannot pretend to say; but from your account of the papers taken from the man's breast, I should be inclined to think it was the lady, and that probably these were letters of hers which the husband had discovered, and of which he desired to gain possession. Being a West Indian—supposing this to have been the man—and possibly having no friends in Europe, would account for his being wholly unknown at the Embassies, or indeed anywhere else.'

After another pause, the vicar, speaking almost to himself, added: 'Ah! poor Dennis; I'm afraid you were a very sad and foolish dog in your day. Had your brother been here, he would have told us all.'

After dinner, when the ladies had retired, and the vicar and I were alone, he again referred to the subject, saying that he had just called to mind a circumstance, which he should otherwise have probably entirely forgotten, as of little moment, had not my story awakened in his mind an idea that this circumstance might prove a sort of connecting link and sequel to my narration.

'A young naval officer,' continued the vicar, 'the son of one of my parishioners, was at home on leave a few months ago. He was a most pleasant and chatty companion, and full of anecdote. He casually mentioned that, whilst serving on the West India station, he had more than once been ashore on the island of Martinique, and spoke of a beautifully situated mansion known as the Château Giraudière, standing on a fine estate which had been long without an owner, and for possession of which the lawyers had been for years past desperately quarrelling and fighting. The story was that it had belonged, about half a century ago, to an immensely rich planter, of French extraction, named Giraudière; and that his only child and heir, a son about twenty-five years of age, had gone away on a pleasure trip to visit the capitals of Europe. He had been to Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and London; but at the last place all trace of him had been lost, and he had never more been heard of. It was supposed in the island that he had been shipwrecked at sea on his return home; and although every effort and inquiry had been made by his father, and everything done that could be done, no tidings were ever received of him; and when the old father died, the estate and château, which had been left by will to this son, went to ruin for want of an owner. Now,' continued the vicar, 'putting our stories together, and remembering the initial "G." on the snuff-box, the French accent, the French-made watch and sword, and the dark swarthy complexion, is it not quite possible that the man you and my uncle saw killed in the duel in the garden of the Cumberland inn fifty years ago, was none other than the identical son and heir of the French planter M. Giraudière, so long missing from Martinique?'

'It is more than possible—it is most probable,' I replied, deeply interested in this curious revelation. 'But unfortunately, everybody in any way connected with the mysterious affair is dead and gone long ago, including my father and Colonel Dacre; and as the planter appears to have left no relatives whatever except his lost son, I fear that inquiry of any kind would now benefit no one, except perhaps the lawyers, who seem to have got the business entirely in their own hands.'

A long and interesting conversation then followed; and both Mr Hiffennan and myself came to the conclusion that the best thing to do would be to carry out the old saying, 'Let bygones be bygones!'

I may add that the watch, snuff-box, sword,

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and other valuables, that had belonged to the deceased, are most carefully preserved as interesting curiosities by the representatives of Colonel Dacre; and that a tablet was put up in the church of the village with the following simple inscription:

In a Vault beneath this Church
are deposited the Remains of

A YOUNG GENTLEMAN,

aged about 25 years,
Whose Name, Rank, Residence, or Country
are alike unknown.

He was killed in a Duel, fought by Moonlight, in the
Garden of an Inn in this Village, on the Morning of the
19th of July 1770;

And his body was left where it fell,
to the Loving-kindness and Christian Sympathy
of Strangers.

BESS!

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

I.

THE light of early morning was just beginning to pierce the murky air which at all times hangs like a dimly transparent veil over and around Black Regis, as I entered that typical Black Country village. A long straggling row of tumble-down huts, boasting two shutter-covered windows and one shattered door, constituted the chief feature of the place; the few houses in fair repair being quite subordinate. In each of the huts aforesaid might be found a little forge, or 'smithy' fire, an anvil, a large number of small square iron bars, and hammers for shaping the same into nails. And in these huts work one or two young women or girls, engaged throughout the livelong day in the occupation of nail-making. From early morning until late at night you can hear the ceaseless tap, tap! tap, tap! of the small nail-hammers wielded by the muscular amazons of Black Regis. A strange sight truly. I was long of opinion that nail-making was a species of labour confined to the male sex; and I confess I would rather have remained under that delusion; for I cannot help feeling a certain repugnance at beholding women engaged in such occupations.

Black Regis is, as I have said, a murky place; being darkened by the smoke and chemical fumes that arise from coal-pit shafts, iron and chemical works, and the like, in the immediate surroundings. To a stranger, this smoke, with its accompaniment of variegated fumes, is offensive, and well-nigh intolerable. But the inhabitants of Black Regis inhale the poisonous atmosphere uncomplainingly, and are possibly ignorant of its noxious character.

Black Regis is a dull place socially as well as atmospherically. There is no place of public amusement or recreation other than the public-house, and the half-levelled surfaces of refuse used as a cricket or gambling ground. But these were sufficient for such as have no higher craving or more laudable ambition. 'Good enough for them as is in it!' was the emphatic assertion of the chief personage of this sketch—Bess! Bess what? Nothing else. Nothing but plain, simple, honest Bess. She had apparently no other name. 'And don't want none neither!' was the

triplly strong negation in which she replied to the same query put to her by myself. 'What's the use o' having more'n one name? It don't make you any better, nor any richer. It only takes longer to say, and ain't noways a bit o' use.'

'But it would be rather awkward,' said I, 'if everybody had only one name. We could not get on in the world at all.'

'Well, p'raps not. But that ain't nothin' to do wi' me. There ain't no use as I can see on for such as me to have more'n one name. We ain't known more'n two or three mile away from home; an' nobody cares to know whether we has a name at all or not, for that matter, so long as we pays for all as we get, an' don't come no capers. Why, sir, what do it matter to you whether my name's Bess, or Sal, or Liz, so long as you gets to know what you wants to know from me, an' pays nothin' for it?'

This was a cut. The off-hand manner in which the speech was delivered, and the twinkle of the eye which accompanied the last clause of it, showed me that Bess was no fool, but a sharp, shrewd young woman, who had fathomed the curiosity that had led me to seek the otherwise unwelcome interior of her little hut. She had an eye to the 'siller' too, I thought; that last hint of hers telling me plainly that she did not expect to talk to me for nothing. I took up two or three of the nails she had forged, and telling her I would take them home with me as a sample of her skill, requested her to accept a trifling equivalent.

'There, go on! That was only my chaff. I don't mind your talking a bit; only there's so many fools comes gabbin' here, and expectin' me to waste my time foolin' wi' 'em. I didn't think as you was one on 'em; but I thought I'd try you. You see, you never knows what's in the pit till you sinks the shaft, and then you see as whether there's anything worth working, or only rubbish.'

'Well, Bess—I suppose I may call you Bess?'

'Why, of course, what else could you call me, I'd like to know?'

'Of course, I'd forgotten that. Well, what was that affair of Bill Thomson being saved from drowning, that I heard about this morning?'

'I thought as much! I knew you'd come a-fishin'. I never see such fools as some men is. Can't take care o' theirselves, and then kicks up a lot o' bother when anybody does a bit of a thing for 'em. Bill ought to ha' known better than to go an' fall into the canal, an' him drunk an' all. An' he ought to ha' known better than to go an' make a lot o' palaver an' talk about me pulling of him out. Why, anybody 'ud pull a man out o' the water as couldn't get out himself. There ain't nothin' to make a fuss about in that. If somebody else had a-heard him holler instead o' me, they'd a-run an' hauled him out by the hair as I did.'

'But you nearly lost your own life—did you not?'

'I dunno! P'raps I did. I know I was under the water a bit. You see, women's petticoats hang about their legs, an' is a trouble to 'em. But there, I never see such a fool as that Bill is, anyway. Next time he falls in, he'll stop in for me—if there's anybody else about to pull him out.' The latter part of the speech was

added apologetically, as if she were ashamed of having been so mean as to say she would not help anybody in distress.

A good soul, Bess. Rough, uncultivated, unrefined, but still noble in a rugged way, and possessing the true qualities of heroism—courage and humility. Black Regis was the better for her presence. She was in some degree a restraining influence for good. Her companions and associates almost unconsciously feared her censure, and were often deterred from committing unworthy actions by the thought of what Bess would say. In difficulty they ran to her. She could advise, and better still, assist them in their needs; and many an act of true charity was performed by her.

None could quell a disturbance quicker than she. When the authority of the policeman would have been laughed at, she could command respect and order. Upon one occasion she caught a miner ill-using his wife, and, calling the men who stood listlessly by 'a lot o' faint-hearted fools,' took the case in hand herself, and gave the man a good beating. This raised her very high in the estimation of the Black Registes. Nothing so popularises a person in the eyes of the vulgar and untutored as muscular superiority—supremacy of brute-force. From that time forth the appearance of Bess upon the scene of action was sufficient in most cases to stay the hands of the combatants.

The Bill Thomson affair was not so simple as Bess tried to make it appear. She had really saved the man's life at the risk of her own, and only succeeded in crawling to the edge of the canal after very great difficulty, holding the senseless Bill in her powerful arms. How she came to be near him when he fell in, she never quite clearly explained. 'She was just out for an airing, that was all, when she heard him holler,' she had said when questioned upon the subject. But I am inclined to think there were other and more sufficient reasons than this, as the sequel will perhaps show.

Bill declared he owed his life to Bess; that she was a brave lass, and he would do anything she liked for her if she would only ask him.

Practical Bess, having the cause of his mishap clearly in mind, returned simply: 'Then give up drinking for three months.'

'I will. If I don't, blow me!' emphatically answered Bill. Those who are not acquainted with the daily life of such men as Bill in such a place as Black Regis, will not be able, I fear, to appreciate the sacrifice he was making in promising to abstain from intoxicating liquors for three months. But I am inclined to think in this matter also that other considerations than respect and gratitude influenced Bill's decision. We shall see.

II.

Twelve months later I was in Black Regis again. I could discern no change in the place, save perhaps that the air seemed even more murky, and the fumes more nauseous than ever. There were the same straggling rows of huts, and I could hear the same ceaseless tap, tap! tap, tap! of the hammers. At the *Rising Sun* I made inquiries respecting Bess, and was some-

what amused, but only partly surprised, to find that she was married—to Bill Thomson. Bill, true to his promise, had abstained from drink for the specified three months, and, at the expiration of that time, had paid a special visit to the hut of Bess to inform her of the fact. She was busy with her work as Bill strolled in, and to his humble 'Evenin', Bess!' characteristically replied: 'Now then, what are you after now? Don't come here foolin' round, for I ain't no time to talk.'

'Well, Bess,' apologetically responded Bill, 'I've kept my promise.'

'What promise?' queried Bess, striking the bar of iron at the same time, and causing a fan-shower of sparks to fly round the hut.

'Why, about the drink. It's three months to-day since I promised as I wouldn't have any more, an' I ain't neither.'

'Well, do you feel any worse for it?'

'I feel a good sight better, an' I've saved a bit o' coin too. I shouldn't ha' done it but for you, Bess; an' I come to see if you'll go shares in it. It's as much yours as mine, you see, for if it hadn't been for you, I shouldn't'—

'Here, stow it!' interrupted matter-of-fact Bess. 'What d'you take me for? Think I want your coin? I never see such a fool in all my life.'

'Won't you have it, then?'

'Have it? No! What 'ud I have it for? Tain't mine.'

'Well then, Bess, I tell you what I'll do,' said the desperate Bill; 'I'll make a bargain with you. I'll promise to be teetotal for another three months, if you'll promise to be my wife at the end of 'em.'

Bess was silent. This honest proposal was perhaps not quite unexpected; but honest Bess knew not how to meet it. She replied: 'I never see such fools as some men is; but it is said she stealthily wiped a tear from her bright brown eyes, and gulped down a lump that rose in her throat.

'Come, Bess, what d'you say?' coaxingly inquired anxious Bill.

'What do I say? Why, that I never see such a fool. What on earth d'you want to throw yourself away on a good-for-nothing like me for? I ain't no mortal use only to myself; an what's the use o' you tying a tin can like me to your tail to scamper through the world wi'?' Of course, I'd sooner go wi' you nor anybody else—allays thought so—but then I never thought as you'd ask me.'

'Then it's a bargain?' asked Bill.

'Well, I might do worse. But mind you, not a word to anybody about it, or over you go. I ain't a-goin' to have folks a-talkin' about me.'

'Not a word, Bess. Bless you, old gal.'

The three months passed away, and, all preparations having been secretly made, Bess and Bill were quietly married, only two particular friends being informed of the affair before it came off, and they only on the very morning of the ceremony.

There was great excitement at Black Regis when the marriage was made public, and all determined on giving some testimony of their goodwill. A private subscription list was opened at once, and as Bess had kept her love-affair such

a secret from them, they thought it only fair that they should keep their intentions secret from her. There was something rudely noble about this arrangement. When the money had been collected, the difficulty of providing a suitable present arose. What could they give her? Some one suggested giving her the money, and allowing her to spend it as she thought proper. But this was indignantly negatived. They knew Bess too well to think she would accept a gift of money from them. It is a strange but wholesome characteristic of the English people, that the smallest present of manufactured goods is thankfully accepted and gratefully acknowledged, while a gift of money is rejected as an insult. After much consultation, it was decided to present her with a tea-service and—a cradle! The latter article is generally considered by such people—and not always them alone—as an indispensable article of domestic furniture, and therefore a suitable thing to present to a person newly married.

The presentation was made at night, and for once Bess was speechless. Good, simple soul, the possibility of such an expression of regard from her rough neighbours had never occurred to her. She could only mutter demurely her customary, 'I never see such fools as some folks is,' and then hide her face in her hands and burst into tears. So kind herself, the kindness of others usually so rough and emotionless, was too much for her.

Bill thanked the friends for their gift, and pointing to the weeping Bess, said: 'You see, boys, she ain't used to this sort o' thing, an' it's kind o' knocked her over. I know you means well, an' I shan't forget it. But if it's all the same, perhaps you wouldn't mind leaving Bess an' me alone a bit till she kind o' gets over it. You see, I don't want you to think as I don't think enough of what you've done; only, you see, she ain't used to this sort o' thing, an' it's kind o' knocked her over.'

The audience kindly left the newly married pair together.

Six months had passed away since the marriage, when I once more stood in the hut of Bess—now Mrs Thomson. As I entered, she looked up with a smile of recognition, and a hearty: 'Hullo! here again, sir? Why, what on earth do you see here, to make you come back again?'

'Not much, Mrs Thomson, truly,' I replied, laying great stress upon her new name. She blushed crimson as she laughingly replied: 'Ah! I thought as they'd tell you as soon as you set foot in the place. I never see such born idiots in all my days.'

'Well, I must congratulate you on your marriage; and I hope you will be happy together.'

'Well, you see, Bill was such a fool, an' couldn't take care of hisself. You know I had to fish him out o' the water once. But he ain't tasted drink since, an' he promised as he wouldn't if I'd marry him. An' you see it was a pity to see a fellow like Bill goin' an' makin' such a fool of hisself; so I thought I might as well take care on him, as leave him to somebody worse than myself. I ain't a bad sort, if I am a bit rough; but men is no good if they ain't got some'dy to look after 'em.'

Then, as if suddenly remembering something, she threw down her hammer, and bidding me 'Come here a minute,' hurried out of the hut to a little one-story house that stood close by. Opening the unlocked door, she bade me enter, and then with the air of a duchess, threw open a little cupboard door with one hand, and pointed to a prettily furnished cradle with the other.

'Oh! Your wedding presents?' I exclaimed.

'Yes!' she replied with some pride, and with the shadow of a tear glistening in her bright eye. 'They ain't much, sir; leastways, they don't seem much to you, I s'pose; but you know we're poor folks about here, an' has to work hard for all as we get, an' it was all they could afford; an' it was good of 'em, wasn't it?'

At the recollection of the presentation episode, the truant tears overflowed the reservoir of feeling, and trickled down the dusky cheek. I am not ashamed to confess that the water stood in my own eyes as I huskily replied that 'it was good of them.'

I think I never realised so fully before the true worth of a genuine, though humble gift, and the sunshine of gratitude and joy it will shed upon the heart and life of an honest recipient. There was more robust joy in that heart of Bess's over that cradle and those cups and saucers, than is felt by the majority of richly dowered brides, any one of whose presents would be a modest competence to such as she.

'Ah! sir, we ain't all as black as you'd think from our faces. We're rough outside, an' not over-nice; but we know how to feel, an' to help each other.' Casting one hasty glance at the household treasures, she once more repaired to the little hut, and taking up her hammer, commenced her labours again with renewed vigour.

'Well, Mrs Thomson'—

'Now then, none o' that! Call me Bess.'

'Well then, Bess, I must be making my way back.'

'Won't you stay an'— You'll excuse me, sir, for asking you—but won't you stay an' have a bite with us? Bill 'ull be home directly. Ah! there he is—an' he'll be glad to see you. We can't offer you much; but what we have, you're welcome to.'

I scarcely knew what to say to this proposal. I really wanted to leave Black Regis by the first train; but I was afraid that I should offend Bess if I refused to accept her invitation. I therefore determined to stay.

I found Bill a rough-and-ready honest fellow, like the general class of people inhabiting such districts. But he had not the natural sagacity and shrewdness of Bess, who was literally his 'better-half.' He knew this too, and looked up to her as a superior being. During her temporary absence, he said proudly: 'She's a good un, is Bess, sir; an' she's more in her head than a good many as thinks they're clever. Saved my life too, sir. Ah! she's a good un, is Bess!'

And I quite agreed with Bill.

III.

Other six months elapsed before I once more set foot in Black Regis. My first impulse was

to walk straight to the hut of Bess; but remembering that, on the occasion of my former visit, I had received much valuable information respecting her from the landlord of the *Rising Sun*, I determined to pay a passing visit to ascertain if anything unusual had occurred during my absence. In reply to my query, 'How is Bess?' the face of the landlord became at once sorrowful and distressed, and I then learned for the first time that poor Bess was dead.

In a disjointed fashion, I managed to glean the following facts from my informant. Some months after my last visit, a great event occurred in the Thomson household—a son and heir was born to Bill. Of course, there was great rejoicing in Black Regis. Everybody in the place took an active interest in the affair, and discussed the future prospects of the little stranger over pipes and beer, and at house corners, as keenly as though some event of national importance had transpired. Bill was peculiarly excited; Bess was calmly happy. Only one feeble complaint she uttered when informed that the child was a boy: 'I'd rather it had been a gal: men is such fools!'

After this she settled down to the inevitable with good grace, showing great affection for the little life thrown upon her care. A few days after the occurrence, Bill, who had been staying at home to wait on his spouse, went to his work again as usual, leaving Bess with her child dependent upon the friendly assistance of kindly neighbours. As the evening came, Bess grew perceptibly anxious. Could she have spoken her fears, she would have said she was wondering if Bill would be tempted by his mates to take drink on the joyful occasion of the birth of his child. She knew he was not hard to persuade when surrounded by friends, and besides it was a recognised custom to drink the health of a child when born. Bess did not say anything to the neighbour who came in to attend to her, but she was terribly anxious nevertheless. The time for his appearance passed, and the shades of the autumn evening fell. Still he did not come. Should she ask some one to go and inquire for him? No! she must not let them think she doubted him. He would come all right yet. Something had happened at the works to detain him. The suspense grew terrible. She could bear it no longer. Excitement gave her strength. Rising from her bed, and leaving the infant asleep there, she with some difficulty pulled on her clothes. She was tottering feebly towards the door, when her straining ear caught the sound of a muffled cry. She had heard that cry once before. It caused her heart to leap and the blood to course like fire through her veins. Strung up with the energy of a strong soul roused by the cry of duty and danger, she sprang to the door and rushed wildly out into the chill darkness of the deepening night. Straight to the dangerous pool of the canal she staggered with a peculiar instinct bred of fear, and the remembrance of a former adventure there. As she reached the edge of the bank, she saw a clenched hand disappearing beneath the surface of the mud-stirred water, and heedless of all but the one fact of her husband drowning there, she plunged wildly in and clutched the horny fingers with a desperate grasp, and with almost superhuman strength succeeded in dragging

the unconscious Bill to the sloping edge of the canal. Having accomplished this, her poor human nature could do no more. With a feeble cry for help, she sank down in the shallow water exhausted and insensible. Hearing her cry, two or three neighbours rushed to the spot, and quickly carried the husband and wife to their humble abode. With great promptitude and care they attended to poor Bess, and sent for the doctor to attend to Bill.

But for Bill it was too late. The strong man had breathed his last. They dared not tell Bess, for fear the shock should be too much for her. Bill's body was removed to a neighbour's house, while the doctor set about measures to prevent serious consequences to the devoted wife. But alas! no medicine could avail. The shock had been too severe. In a few hours she was delirious and in a raging fever. The burden of her ravings was Bill. 'I never see such a fool as Bill. He ain't no more sense than a child.—Ha! my little pet.—Ah! I wish he'd been a gal, men is such fools. You promised me you'd swear off the drink, an' here you go foolin' around, an' fallin' into the canal.' Then suddenly changing, and speaking to the doctor. 'Sh-h-h! Don't let Bill know as I'm dying. He's such a fool, an' ull carry on so. Tell him I shall get better. But when I do go, make him promise to take care o' the kid.—You will, won't you? It ain't no fault o' his, poor little soul. I wish he'd a-been a gal, though. But then he ain't; an' maybe he won't be such a fool as Bill. Make him swear off the drink when he grows up; it makes men such fools. Ah! you'll put him in the little cradle? I thought I should ha' rocked it myself; but Bill can do it instead. It was good o' 'em, wasn't it though, to give us that? God bless 'em!'

And thus poor Bess rambled on. The struggle was fierce and short with her. In forty-eight hours after the time she was carried all wet and senseless to bed, her heart was stilled for ever. Poor Bess!

They buried Bill and her together in the little churchyard, the greater part of Black Regis following the remains in procession, and shedding tears over the grave. Something had gone out of their lives. They felt its loss, and knew that it would never be supplied.

There was only one thing left for them to do after they had laid their idol in the ground, and that was to take care of the child. A meeting was held to talk over the best method of performing their duty in this respect. After much discussion, a simple and efficacious plan was decided upon and agreed to. They would support the youngster by weekly offerings. A box would be kept at the *Rising Sun* to receive the free-will offerings of as many as cared to contribute towards the maintenance of the child. It should be called 'Bess's Box.' This sacred duty performed, the meeting dispersed, but only to reassemble the next night to discuss another matter concerning the departed Bess. It would not do to allow her grave to have no protection from the sacrilege of those who in a short time would see only a green mound. They must protect the sacred dust with a tombstone. The tombstone was erected, and the grave surrounded with hanging chains attached to four small stone pillars.

The landlord of the *Rising Sun* accompanied

me to the churchyard, but not before showing me 'Bess's Box,' and thanking me for my tribute. We stood beside the little mound with uncovered heads, and looked down upon the green sod that covered the heroic woman who had had

The homage of a thousand hearts,
The strong, deep love of one.

I thought of that cheery face, those sparkling eyes, the genial smile, and the welcome voice silent for ever.

On the neat little stone at the head of the grave were the words, characteristic of the rough people who had inscribed them: 'Here lie BILL THOMSON, and the Queen of Black Regis, Bess.'

THE MONTH.

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

EIGHTEEN months ago, a joint Committee was formed of members of the Kyrle Society and the National Health Society, to consider the possibility of ridding the Metropolis of its canopy of smoke, and of lessening the unhealthy character of London fogs. After many public meetings had been held, it was determined that a Smoke Abatement Exhibition should be organised; and the opening of this Exhibition at South Kensington has been not the least interesting event of the latter days of the past year. The exhibits are divided into six Sections. Section One includes Fire-grates, Kitcheners, and Stoves of all kinds. The Second Section deals with Gas-heating Apparatus; the Third with Hot Air, Hot Water, and Steam-warming Contrivances. The Fourth includes Gas-engines, and Furnaces and Boilers for general industrial purposes. Section Five comprises Fuel of all kinds; and Section Six is devoted to Chimney-flues, Ventilating Apparatus, and foreign exhibits.

We are glad to see that explanatory Lectures are to form a prominent feature of the Smoke Abatement Exhibition. It is too much the fashion in this country to leave visitors to our Museums and Exhibitions to find out for themselves, or to try to do so, such information as could be easily given to them by explanatory labels or short lectures. Thus, it is possible for such a visitor to stand before an archaeological treasure of the greatest interest without having the least idea of its value or history. From the opening Lectures already given at South Kensington, we have promise that no one who wishes to gain information as to fog, smoke, and the means for preventing them need remain in ignorance. One lecture, on 'Economy of Fuel for Domestic Purposes,' by Mr Fletcher of Warrington, is of special interest. He dwells in particular on the advantages of using builders' fireclay for domestic stoves, in lieu of metal; and of the possibility of so arranging fireplaces and flues that several rooms could be raised in temperature by the fire in one.

The British Goat Society, of which the Duke of Wellington is President, and which now numbers two hundred and forty-two members, has just held its annual meeting. This Society

has started a system by which cottagers are supplied with goats at a reasonable cost; and the number of applications for animals far exceeds the number it is at present possible to obtain. The Society proposes the establishment of a Goat Supply Company to meet this want; and it is also proposed to take measures for the removal of the restrictions at present in force as to the importation of goats from abroad. In the course of the proceedings, the President alluded to the extraordinary prejudices which existed against goat's milk; and also remarked that it might be taken for granted that in cases of disease, goat's milk was far more valuable than that yielded by the cow.

Mr George Wilson of Weybridge gives in a letter to the *Times* a valuable hint to farmers. Requiring some hurdles as a sun-shade for plants, he used ordinary hurdles, but found that they soon rotted away through contact with the moist earth. He then hit upon the expedient of coating them with gas-tar; but the brush would not reach the interstices, and the plan failed. By arrangement with the local gas-works, he then sent the hurdles to be dipped in a tank of tar; and the neighbouring farmers are so impressed by the notion, that they too are having their hurdles treated in the same manner. The application of the tar has the effect of a brilliant black weatherproof varnish.

The horses of Ohio and Western Pennsylvania have recently been attacked by a new disease, which resembles in all its symptoms influenza in the human subject. It lasts for about ten days, when it disappears under good nursing and rest, without leaving any secondary complications. The disease spreads very slowly, and does not seem to be contagious; but it has caused much inconvenience in the districts named.

Those persons who denounce vaccination in the human subject may have their doubts removed by studying the paper on the Protective Effect of Vaccination, read by Dr Henry Tomkins the other day at Owen's College, Manchester. He showed that the most striking evidence of the efficacy of vaccination came from the smallpox hospitals themselves. During forty years' experience at Highgate, no nurse or servant who had been re-vaccinated was ever attacked. The students who attended the Hospital for Clinical Instruction were favoured with a like immunity from the disease. This last circumstance gave Dr Tomkins the opportunity of combating an argument often put forward by the opponents of vaccination—namely, that nurses and others attached to smallpox hospitals become inured to the disease from constant exposure to infection; therefore they are safe. The students referred to only attended the Hospital for a few hours once a week, and yet not one of them was attacked. The Doctor, in conclusion, defied anti-vaccinators to produce any half-dozen unprotected persons who could go through the same ordeal unharmed. Might not some of the anti-vaccinators themselves be induced to undergo the experiment?

The Minister of Commerce in France has lately, in view of some projected canal works, consulted the Academy as to the best precautions to be taken to insure the health of the navvies employed. As a result, M. Colin has drawn up a

Report for the guidance of the authorities. He notices in this Report that marshy exhalations are not the sole cause of the fever which attacks the open-air worker, but that virgin soil newly turned gives forth germs from which arise intermittent fevers. He recommends special diet as being more valuable than drugs for guarding against these diseases; and notes that workmen should, if possible, not remain on the ground at night. He also points out the advantage of keeping large fires burning, so as to create air-currents, and of stimulating vegetation on newly turned ground.

The largest photograph ever produced is now to be seen in the Art Gallery of the American Institute in New York. It represents a panoramic view of the Centennial Exhibition of Philadelphia, and measures ten feet in length by eighteen inches in width. It has been printed from seven different negatives; but the places where these negatives join have been so carefully treated that their detection is impossible. We may notice in this connection that gas-fitters are making use of photography in exhibiting to their customers full-sized pictures of the gas-flames given by various burners. For a long time past, such photographs have been used in lighthouses where oil is burnt, so that the keeper can have a standard to look to as he trims the lamp.

Although there are only three British lighthouses where electricity is at present in use, we may feel sure that the present excitement concerning that form of illumination will eventually cause many of the old oil-lamps to be superseded. The latest important advance in this interesting question comes, strange to say, from the Antipodes. Mr Henry Sutton of Ballarat, Australia, has invented a new form of storage-battery, which is said to give far better results than the notable 'box of electricity' due to M. Faure. This invention formed the subject of a paper lately read before our Royal Society. It is worthy of mention that Mr Sutton, with commendable generosity, has not protected his invention by a patent, but offers it freely to the community at large. This is not the only rival to M. Faure's storage-battery; for besides many of French origin, both Mr Brush and the indefatigable Edison have produced a battery of this description.

It is curious to notice how the former opponents of the last-named inventor are now obliged to acknowledge that the type of electric lamp to which he first called attention is, after all, the most likely to solve the problem of domestic illumination. Two years ago, when the so-called 'cardboard lamp' of Edison depreciated the gas shares here to an unwonted extent, there were many who declared that the invention was the creation of speculators for the purpose of influencing the stock market. The cardboard lamp now furnishes a type upon which all the so-called 'incandescent systems' of lighting are modelled. The fact that this system has, by the aid of storage-batteries, been successfully applied to the lighting of a train on the Brighton Railway, would seem to indicate that the time cannot be far distant when it will be used for domestic purposes.

The recent fearful accident in Vienna, which resulted in the deaths by fire and suffocation of some hundreds of human beings, has had the

good result of calling the attention of the authorities to the very inadequate provision against fire in most of our public buildings. Unfortunately, theatres and other places of amusement are built of such inflammable materials, that a spark is almost sufficient to set them in a blaze. We hear of a great many inventions for rendering wood and other substances fireproof, but these inventions seem never to come into actual use by builders. We trust that a trial will be given of the new unflammable Asbestos Paint, which, judging from certain experiments lately made at the offices of the Asbestos Company, 161 Queen Victoria Street, London, would seem to be a valuable aid in the prevention of fires. In the experiments referred to, wood, paper, calico, gauze, &c. were coated with the paint and afterwards submitted to the action of flame, which they one and all resisted. Cubes of wood coated with the paint were placed on a coke-fire, with the result that the interior was reduced to charcoal, while the exterior formed a thin unburnt shell. The new paint will lend itself to the employment of any tint, and will resist the action of acids.

It has long been known that the ingenious Chinese were enjoying the use of many conveniences of life before they came to be invented by western nations. Of these we may mention the magnetic needle, the printing press, and gunpowder. It would seem, from a paper read by Mr J. Dreyer in the December number of the Royal Irish Academy, that the Chinese were also far advanced in the science of astronomy, and actually anticipated some of the ideas of Tycho Brahe three hundred years before that great astronomer was born. In the seventeenth century, the Jesuit missionaries made their way to Peking, and soon showed the Emperor and his wise men that in spite of their wisdom, they did not know quite all that had been discovered by western scientists. The Emperor was so impressed with what he heard, that he commissioned the Jesuits to furnish him with new instruments for his observatory; and the old ones which were thus superseded were put away and forgotten. It is to these old instruments that Mr Dreyer in his paper calls attention. Photographs have lately been obtained of them. They show that these old contrivances, constructed by a Chinese astronomer, Ko Show-King, bear a striking resemblance to the instruments with which the great Danish astronomer observed the comet of 1585.

Many of our London readers, remembering the fearful explosion on board a gunpowder barge some ten years since, whilst passing along the canal which runs through the Regent's Park, may be aware that it has ever remained a moot-point whether the catastrophe in question was not in reality occasioned by the escape of petroleum vapour—as from a single sample, probably concealed—which, creeping along the deck, ultimately met with a source of heat sufficient at one and the same time to explode both it and the entire cargo of gunpowder. Certain it is that many dreadful accidents have been clearly traced to the neglect of adequate foresight both in regard to the storage and transport of petroleum; the peculiar danger arising from the fact, that this body, even at low temperatures, emits a heavy and highly explosive vapour, which is ever ready to make its way in a most insidious manner to

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any light, even if far distant. In 'Dittmar's Patent,' a Russian invention, we are promised reasonable immunity for the future from the dangers already spoken of. The patentee in part solidifies the petroleum, reducing it to a body like wax; and it is distinctly asserted that the dangers and difficulties of transport will in this way be overcome. Doubtless, a good deal of reliance may be placed in the statement, since the petroleum in this its altered physical state would not by any means yield the explosive vapour with nearly the same readiness as when its usual conditions prevailed.

Off the coasts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, eight hundred and twenty-six ships were actually lost, British-owned vessels forming three-parts of this total. As in former years, a great many losses were due to collision between vessels, one hundred ships being sunk in this manner. Produce of all kinds, being the various cargoes destroyed or swallowed up by the sea, amounted to nearly one million tons; and although it may seem incredible, we are told that no less than one hundred and thirty-two thousand four hundred and fifty-nine tons of coals were lost. This article of commerce being mostly obtained from Great Britain, and carried in British 'bottoms,' is an important item in the year's losses; and the utter destruction of such a necessary article, bears a sensible relation to the supply and demand, and consequently was sufficient to affect the market value of the mineral. During the past five years, no fewer than five hundred and sixty-four thousand four hundred and fifty-nine tons of coals have been lost at sea by the destruction of the vessels in which they were being carried. And yet this is only one item of the great general loss occasioned by such disasters.

It is not too much to say that most of the collisions which occur between ships at sea might be avoided if each ship were aware of the course intended to be steered by the other. A rough-and-ready mode of doing this has long been in use. It consists of sounding the steam-whistle once, twice, or thrice, for the three signals, 'Starboard,' 'Port,' and 'Astern.' This system has the disadvantage that in foggy weather, when a signal of this description is most needed, it can easily be confounded with the sound of fog-horns and other whistles which in a crowded roadstead are sounding at the same time by dozens. To meet this difficulty, Messrs Smith Brothers & Co., of Hyson Green Brass Works, Nottingham, have invented a kind of combination whistle which will give three distinct and different signals—a high pitch note for 'Starboard,' a low note for 'Port,' and the two together for 'Astern.' It would be well if these musical whistles were applied to locomotive engines as well as steam-vessels, when the unearthly shrieks which frighten horses and disturb everybody in our crowded cities, might be dispensed with.

An instrument, called the Holophote Course Indicator, has been invented by Mr J. H. A. Macdonald, Q.C., Edinburgh, having for its object the prevention of collisions at sea. It is specially intended to diminish risk of collision at night, by enabling vessels approaching or crossing, to inform each other what helm they are on, and instantly to indicate any change of helm; and by

enabling the officer in command to sweep with a powerful light the water over which the ship's course will take it, so as to know whether it is clear. The Holophote Course Indicator consists of an electric light with a reflector, which is fixed on a movable arm or handle. When the helm is amidships, the reflector projects the light straight ahead, the arm being held fast by two pegs or detents, which are under the control of the helm by an electric connection. When the helm is ported, an electric circuit is formed, by which one of the detents holding the arm is withdrawn, leaving the reflector free to move, so that the light sweeps from ahead to starboard. When the light has gone round a certain number of points to starboard, a screen rises up and shuts it out from view. The arm is then brought back to amidships, when the screen falls down, and the light being again exposed, the manœuvre of sweeping round to starboard, screening out, and bringing back to amidships, can be repeated as long as the helm remains ported. If the helm be put to starboard, the other detent is removed, and the exactly converse manœuvre can be performed, the light sweeping round from ahead to port. Thus, the strong beam of the electric light is waved, indicating every alteration of the course of the vessel whenever it is made, just as a man driving a carriage can give an indication of his course to another driver by a wave of the hand. It is well known that a most frequent cause of collision is the uncertainty on board one vessel of what is being done by another. One vessel may alter her course, and swing round many points, while the distance is rapidly diminishing between her and another, before those on board the other have any warning of the change. The Holophote Course Indicator enables the change of helm to be signalled instantaneously. A model of the instrument has been sent to the Exhibition of Electrical Apparatus at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham.

EXPERIMENTS WITH SNAKE-POISON.

It is evident that the proposed injection of permanganate of potash in cases of snake-bite continues to find favour with many experimenters; for, following up the work first taken in hand by Dr De Lacerda, we now gather from the *Indian Medical Gazette* that satisfactory results ensued upon the recent prosecution of experiments on the part of Dr Vincent Richards. We are told that this gentleman, having mixed permanganate of potash with what he considered a fully fatal dose of cobra virus, hypodermically injected the mixture direct into a vein, without causing the death of the animal experimented upon. We must, however, receive with caution any statement to the effect that a never-failing antidote has been discovered, though we cannot but express the fervent hope that some real good may accrue from the experiments which are being conducted by so many independent investigators; and if success be ultimately proclaimed in the present search for a specific in the matter of snake-bite, it might not prove a question of any great length of time ere medical science would with equal felicity enter upon a course of experimental inquiry which might in the end light upon a successful

mode of treatment to be applied to a still more terrible malady—namely, hydrophobia. In many of the pathological changes ultimately wrought, this dreadful disease strikingly approximates to the more sudden fell stroke of snake-bite. One remarkable difference may, however, be noted: it is quite possible that all the premonitory symptoms of hydrophobia may distinctly manifest themselves, and yet shortly pass off, leaving the patient but little worse than before; but in the case of cobra or rattlesnake virus, it is extremely rare for recovery to take place when the various symptoms have once been fairly ushered in. A person fairly bitten by a cobra will be dead within twenty-four hours; but if bitten by a rabid dog—if by a rabid cat, so much the worse!—hydrophobia may supervene after a period ranging commonly between four and ten weeks from the inception of the virus.

We are indebted to *The Scotsman* for the following remarks upon this interesting subject: 'There are several substances now known to have the effect, when mixed with snake-venom, of diminishing, if not altogether destroying, its virulence. Mr Pedler, in a recent communication to the Royal Society, drew attention to several of these, and especially to the chloride of platinum, which forms, with cobra poison, a precipitate highly insoluble in water, and with little or no poisonous action. However effective such substances may be in neutralising poison outside the body, they fail to overtake and neutralise the subtle venom once it has got the start in the blood. Were the chloride of platinum injected first, it would probably disarm the poison entering behind it.

'In a recent lecture on Snakes, Professor Huxley drew attention to the fact, that the poison-bag of the venomous snake is simply a modification of the salivary gland of the harmless species. The fact that the salivary gland was the poison laboratory of the venomous snakes, appeared to him to point out the direction in which lay the solution of the difficult problem of the cause of snake-poisoning, and of a probable antidote against it.

'Much light has been thrown on this subject by the recent researches of Selmi, Lacerda, and Gautier. Professor Selmi, several years ago, discovered in the putrefying bodies of animals certain poisonous substances which he called *ptomaines*, and which he found to produce, when introduced into the living body, symptoms very similar to those of snake-poisoning. Dr Gautier's investigations on the *ptomaines* led to the important discovery that those poisons are being constantly generated in the normal excretions of the living body, and that they are present in minute quantities in most of our tissues, being, indeed, one of the results of the waste continually going on in these. The more rapid the waste of tissue, the greater will be the quantity of those poisons formed; and thus it might be expected that the carcase of an animal killed immediately after prolonged and severe exertion, would be unwholesome; and this is a fact that has been frequently observed. A writer in the *Journal of Science* for December last gives the instance of a roebuck which had been caught in a snare, and had died after a

prolonged struggle. "All the persons who partook of its flesh," he says, "became seriously ill;" and two of them, so far as he recollects, died in consequence. They were poisoned, it may be presumed, by the excess of *ptomaines* generated in the animal's tissues. Dr Gautier then examined the venom of the lance-headed snake of Martinique, and of the cobra, in each of which he found an alkaloid possessing all the properties of the *ptomaines*. After tracing those poisons which have thus been shown to be normal products of organic existence in the venom of snakes, he next sought for them in human saliva—the product of those glands which, in the serpent, yield poison. From three-quarters of an ounce of saliva he obtained by evaporation a dry residue of four grains; and on redissolving this in tepid water, and injecting a quantity of the liquid beneath the skin of birds, he found that they generally died with symptoms very similar to those of snake-poisoning. Something very like "the poison of asps" may thus be said to have been found under our tongues; and Dr Gautier's investigation throws light on the fact, that the bite of an enraged man or other animal is dangerous, and has not infrequently proved fatal. If the venom of serpents were something absolutely new and unknown among other animals, it would be difficult to understand how, on the theory of evolution, it had been produced. The whole thing, however, becomes plain when it is found that in the venom of snakes we have, in a modified and concentrated form, what already existed, and is still to be found, in the saliva of non-venomous animals. It is not a creation of anything new, but a modification of something old.'

FADING INTO CHANGE.

A GRADUAL falling in the Summer light;
Bright sunsets dying in the crimson West;
Brown leaves that fall in the quiet Autumn night;
A swift decay in flowers we love the best;
A flush of Life, slow-deepening into Rest;
A wintry wind beneath a threatening sky;
Snow-flakes that fall, and gather, and then die!
Spring, with its changing winds and leafy vest;
Full Summer, with its wealth of flowers that lie
Sparkling like gems upon a monarch's crest;
Then round to Autumn! So our brief years fly,
So run our days! Sometimes in sunshine drest,
And oft in cloud! So fleeteth fitfully
Each little life into the Great Eternity! J. H.

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